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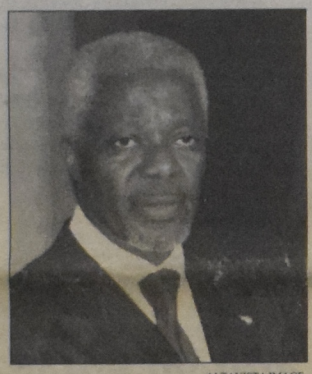
57th year of publication

Religious groups having increasing impact on United Nations

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Religious groups are having an increasing impact on the work of the United Nations, but need to be more effective to make a difference, according to *Religion and Public Policy at the UN* — a new report from Religion Counts, a left-leaning group of scholars who provide religious perspectives on international public policy. But Hermina Dykxhoorn — an Albertan who has often taken part in UN conferences — thinks the report takes a simplistic look at the role of religious groups at the UN. "It's far more complex" in reality, she says.

"Religion has been a critical part of the UN since its inception and continues to offer a distinct dimension and voice there that other entities do not bring to international issues. The UN cannot fail to engage with religion, and in doing so must recognize that religion is not monolithic and defies predictability, especially when it comes to the critical issues debated at the UN," stated Philip Boyle, chief operating officer at the Park Ridge Center for the Study of Health, Faith and Ethics — which did the research for the report.



ALTAVISTA IMAGE

Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, has set a tone of appreciation for the work of religious groups at the UN.

A blueprint for action

A primary goal of the report is to provide a blueprint for religious and secular non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and for UN agencies to see more clearly how religion can work constructively at the UN.

Analyzing how religious groups work with the UN, the report states, "Potentially, religion has something to say about everything because it speaks from an authority that encompasses all things. Some religious groups express this through a 'prophetic' concern for social justice, an approach derived initially from the biblical prophets. One former U.S. government official feels that this religious 'gadfly' function is crucial in holding governments accountable. Some religious groups weigh in on UN debates with ethical prescriptions grounded in their traditions; others use the language of 'salvation' in seeking to save a wayward world...."

ALAN DOERKSEN

Hermina Dykxhoorn

But Dykxhoorn, who is president of the Alberta Federation of Women United for Families, comments, "I haven't heard the salvation thing very much." She thinks religious groups don't offer "ethical prescriptions — they're coherent worldviews and ways of life."

The great divide

According to Religion Counts, the most visible ideological divide at the UN is between two religious camps:

"Conservatives, usually called the 'the religious right' and labeled 'right-wing extremists' by progressives, and progressives, called

See **DYKXHOORN** *page 2...*

Twelve million people face starvation in Africa

BURLINGTON, Ont. — The United Nations World Food Program has warned that there are 12.8 million people on the brink of starvation in southern Africa. The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) is responding with 3,500 metric tons of food supplies, which will be distributed to hungry families through African churches and organizations.

The famine situation in Southeastern Africa is extensive. In Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Zambia floods have washed away crops in some areas, and severe drought has prevented new plants from growing. Other countries — such as Angola, Democratic People's Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia, and Lesotho — have also been affected by recent drought conditions, reports CRWRC in a press release.

"It is a most terrible thing when your children cry for food and you have nothing to give them," desperate mothers expressed to CRWRC staff in Malawi and Zambia.

Responding to hurting people

CRWRC is responding to the cries of these hurting people by working with African organizations to distribute food. Save Orphans Ministries, the Presbyterian Church of Malawi, and the Reformed Church of Zambia have a long history of partnership with CRWRC and have played a vital role in fostering adult literacy, improved health, better agriculture, and increased income in many African communities.

Today, these three organizations are helping CRWRC prepare to distribute 3,500 tonnes of food supplies via a food for work program. Working in collaboration with Canadian Foodgrains Bank, food will be shipped from North America and distributed to communities in need. In exchange for food rations, families will help set up a system to harvest and conserve rainwater. By conserving rainwater, communities will be able to irrigate crops and secure at least one harvest each year.

CRWRC and its partners plan to follow this project with a seed distribution program later in the year to replace the seed that farmers have been forced to eat during the famine.

Financial support for CRWRC's response in Southeast Africa can be given online at **www.crwrc.org** (click Disaster Response, please choose Fund designation: International).

EDWARD S. ROSS

A rural village in Namibia. Most of Namibia's dry lands yield barely enough food for its people. Recent drought conditions have worsened the situation.

News

Dykxhoorn questions UN report's views on religion

... continued from page 1

'liberals' or 'the religious left,' and labeled 'radicals' by conservatives." Religion Counts includes itself in that category.

"Doesn't 'progressive' sound awfully nice?" asks Dykxhoorn. The report's writers "admit the report is biased in their favor," she observes. "They should have at least attempted to get a 50-50 split.... They make it sound like there's this huge block of people working on the conservative side." But at a recent UN children's conference she took part in, there were only 17 "pro-life, pro-family" groups out of about 700. However, she notes that conservative Christian groups are "gaining ground" at the UN.

Fine line can't always be drawn

Although the report tries to divide Christian groups neatly between conservative and progressives, such a fine line can't always be drawn. Some groups, such as the Vatican, could be considered progressive on issues such as development and helping the poor, but conservative on issues of sexuality and reproduction.

As a religious and political power, the Vatican (Holy See) has an unusually prominent role at the UN, according to the report. "In 1964 the Holy See was granted permanent observer status in the UN General Assembly as a non-member state, a status it has shared only with Switzerland, which has just voted to apply to become a member state. Thus the Holy See, although a religious body, differs from religious NGOs, which are limited to consultative relationships with the UN system."

Dykxhoorn questions the report's assertion that the Vatican uses "obstructionist tactics in UN conferences."

"What exactly can they do to coerce?" she asks, indicating that the Vatican has limited powers at the UN.

Having participated in UN conferences for seven years, Dykxhoorn observes that she sees the UN as operating with "a secular mindset." But she adds that some religions, such as Bahai, get more attention from the UN than others. At the UN, she says, "you will see glossy literature from all of the Eastern religions, proliferating all over their offices. I have never seen any Christian literature there at all."

She also tells of how non-religious groups can be threatening to Christians at the UN. "You wouldn't believe some of the intimidation," she asserts, giving the example of a group of lesbians who once surrounded her at a UN conference, chanting, "We won, we won, we won. You lost, you lost, you lost!"

New openness to religion

There is a new openness to religion and its potential contributions to the UN's work, observes the report. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, an Anglican, has set a tone of appreciation for religion and the work of religious groups at the UN, says Religion Counts. In a 1998 speech at the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, he told his audience: "You may be wondering what a Secretary-General of the United Nations is doing in a synagogue, speaking about religion. The UN is a tapestry — not only of suits and saris, but of clerics' collars, nun's habits and lamas' robes." Annan declared that the "politics of nations... can never ignore the transcendent, spiritual dimension of the human experience."

The report also points out obstacles facing religious NGOs dealing with the UN. "Bureaucratic constraints impinge on the work of all NGOs at the UN, " the report explains. This often creates NGO frustration over inflexible procedures and institutional inertia. The wheels of the UN grind at a slow, diplomatic pace.

The report warns that religions have an "Achilles heel" they need to watch out for: "propensity for discord and conflict, which alienates many in the UN system." But Dykxhoorn says discord can be expected when people have different points of view. "It's only natural — get used to it."

Sometimes religious groups of different stripes co-operate on issues of mutual interest, forming unlikely alliances, the report observes. That is something Dykxhoorn has observed — for instance, the co-operation between Muslims and Christians on certain family-related issues.

Keys to effectiveness

To be more effective in influencing the UN, Religion Counts recommends these approaches:

- Become indispensable to the work of the UN — with expertise, experience, information, resources, connections.
- Establish a reputation for absolute integrity and reliability.
- Be willing to rise above self-serving or narrow goals.
- Learn the ropes. The UN's formal structure takes time to learn.
- Develop the virtues of patience and perseverance — since complex organizations such as the UN move at a snail's pace. If you are not committed long-term, and if you demand major changes immediately, you will probably not be effective at the UN, suggests Religion Counts.

Dykxhoorn agrees that these ideas are "the way you're going to influence and have your message heard.... Those who are good at it have risen to the top." These ideas are a better alternative than "mouthing slogans." She has seen Christians continuing to become more effective at lobbying the UN, with professionally-done presentations.

Chrétien government needs to strengthen ethical rules and practices, say critics

Alan Doerksen

OTTAWA — Like dominoes, a series of ethical scandals has hit the federal Liberals recently. In their wake, the Chrétien government has been developing new ethical rules for cabinet and other key government employees. But some political observers believe more fundamental changes are needed to bring back a strong sense of ethics to the government.

In a May 23 speech, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien outlined his government's plans to address ethical problems, and on June 11 he followed this up by presenting a new government ethics package to Parliament. Here are its key points, as highlighted in Chrétien's speech:

Going public with ethics rules

"For the first time ever, we will make public the *Guide for Ministers and Secretaries of State*, which outlines the standards of ethical conduct that should guide them.

- We will be releasing revised rules for ministerial dealings with Crown corporations. They will clarify the relationship between ministers and Crown corporation when dealing with constituency matters.
- I will be making public guidelines to govern ministerial fundraising for personal political purposes. These will establish rules and procedures that will ensure that such fundraising causes no real or apparent conflict of interest.
- Beginning this fall... I will table the first annual report of the ethics counsellor to Parliament on the range of his duties and activities. And the ethics counsellor will be available to a parliamentary committee to be examined on his report.
- In consultation with the Opposition parties... it is our intention to proceed in the fall with a stand-alone Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament and Senators.
- Building on the work of the Industry Committee of this House, we will table in the fall changes to the Lobbyists Registration Act, to enhance clarity, transparency and enforcement."

COURTESY DEMOCRACY WATCH

Duff Conacher, co-ordinator of Democracy Watch.

Another change is that the ethics counsellor will now be appointed after consultation with leaders of Opposition parties, to serve for a five-year term. Dismissal can only take place with the concurrence of Parliament, according to the new rules.

When introducing the new ethics package on June 11, Chrétien told the House of Commons, "Ministerial ... integrity — in fact and in appearance — are the foundation of democratic government. Today's announcement builds on our record of achievement and strengthens governmental ethics by establishing new guidelines for ministerial conduct that take into account ... the fundamental right of Canadians to the assurance that the private political interests of ministers do not create any real or apparent conflicts of interest with the public trust."

Very critical of new rules

Duff Conacher, co-ordinator of the Ottawa-based government watchdog group Democracy Watch, is very critical of the government's new ethics package. "It's Chrétien's deception and defence package," he asserts. "No one should believe anything has changed." The deception is: "all the rules are vague, ambiguous and weak. It's his defence package because he remains the sole enforcer of the rules.... the Prime Minister can overrule any ruling of the ethics counsellor."

Although the new rules suggest the ethics counsellor will be more accountable to Parliament, Conacher denies that that is the case. The counsellor will make annual reports to Parliament, but "no minister will be named" in those reports, Conacher contends. In addition the counsellor will "not make all his rulings public." He calls the counsellor a "lapdog" and "just a front man for the Prime Minister." He notes that "the ethics counsellor has no investigative power at all" regarding cabinet ministers, and can only investigate lobbyists.

CHRISTIAN COURIER FILES

New government rules aim to make ethics counsellor Howard Wilson (above) more accountable to Parliament.

See CHRÉTIEN *page 3...*

News/Politics

Chrétien government called on to set better example on ethics

... *continued from page 2*

At present, Democracy Watch is involved with a court case against Howard Wilson, the current ethics counsellor. Conacher notes that Wilson has still not responded to his agency's inquiries from two years ago about conflict of interest violations by government members.

Asked about how the government has dealt with recent conflicts of interest in the federal cabinet, Conacher says former defence minister Art Eggleton's dismissal was "fair in that he did break conflict of interest rules. It was unfair in that he was a sacrificial lamb" — in that he was the only minister who was fired.

Regarding Don Boudria, Conacher observes that if he wrote a cheque for the owner of the resort he stayed at after that stay became public, "he should have been kicked out of cabinet." But if the cheque was written beforehand, Boudria's demotion was appropriate.

PM not evenhanded

Asked whether the government needs new ethics rules, Ottawa journalist Lloyd Mackey asserts, "That almost goes without saying." Mackey, who is an editorial director of the Ottawa edition of *Christian Current* newspaper, keeps a close eye on the political scene in the nation's capital.

COURTESY LLOYD MACKEY

Lloyd Mackey

Explaining how he perceives Chrétien's handling of ethical indiscretions of cabinet ministers, Mackey says, "I don't think the Prime Minister is being terribly even-handed about it." Don Boudria, Art Eggleton and others were dealt with differently by Chrétien.

"I think in all these things there are some 'optics,'" observes Mackey, refering to how people perceive the situation and how the government deals with it. "It was probably easier to fire Eggleton because there was a little sex involved." On the other hand, Boudria "seemed to be very remorseful" about his ethical dilemma. "He was weeping unconsolably in caucus — this was leaked out," reports Mackey.

In terms of making Canadians more aware of ethics in government, "the opposition has done a good job — as well as the media," observes Mackey.

The government needs to do more to curb ethical problems, suggests Mackey. For instance, before facing a potential conflict of interest, Members of Parliament need to be open about declaring that.

Mackey, himself, has held discussions with MPs in sympathy with his personal philosophy, and observes, "every politician like that has gone to great lengths to keep me at arm's-length" — and avoid a conflict of interest.

Chrétien too 'loosy-goosy'

This fall, the government plans to change the position of ethics counsellor to make him more accountable to Parliament, rather than only to the Prime Minister. Mackey believes it is important for the ethics counsellor to be answerable to Parliament, because this was a Liberal "Red Book" promise made several years ago which has never been acted upon.

Mackey thinks Chrétien should be a better ethical example himself. "It appears the whole ethics question has gotten away from government because the Prime Minister has been 'loosy-goosy' about it. He probably hasn't been the best possible example.... Before he goes too much further, he should seek some ethical advice rooted in his Roman Catholic faith. Let his faith inform him on these things."

Changes to system needed

David Koyzis, professor of political science at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ont., and columnist for *Christian Courier*, believes some fundamental changes need to be made to Canada's Parliamentary system to reduce conflicts of interest. At present, "a cabinet minister has to wear a number of hats," he observes. As a MP, he or she must help out local interests in his or her riding, but as a cabinet minister, he or she should not show special preference to those people.

"That is a major problem, and how to get around it is difficult to say," states Koyzis. He suggests a "blind trust" approach, in which a cabinet minister will ask some staff to deal with home riding concerns at arm's-length from the minister. This is similar to cabinet ministers' practice of cutting their ties to certain business concerns before taking up ministerial responsibilities.

Mackey agrees that Koyzis' "blind trust" idea is "certainly something to ponder" as a way to resolve ethical conflicts.

Looking at the recent cabinet shuffle in Ottawa, Koyzis observes it was "not necessarily" fair for Eggleton to lose his job. Other cabinet ministers has been in similar conflicts of interest so, to be consistent, "probably half a dozen or more people should have resigned." One reason Eggleton got singled out was "because of the sexual angle," Koyzis suggests.

One key problem with the federal government is "the Prime Minister has too much power concentrated in one person," Koyzis contends. For instance, "the PM is unilaterally choosing justices of the Supreme Court" — and appointing people to other positions of power.

Koyzis believes it is time for Chrétien to resign. "He's been at the job for too long. Canada's democracy is in danger because of a single party" controlling power, and a fragmented opposition. "The Liberals have been almost permanently ensconced in power" which could cause them to become "comfortable and complacent."

Martin's departure leaves future in doubt for activists

Margaret Dinsdale

TORONTO, Ont. — Though the loony did not decline nor the stock market collapse, the sudden departure of federal finance minister Paul Martin has left several initiatives he was working on in doubt, especially the policy suggestions of the Campaign Against Child Poverty (CACP).

CACP had issued another in a series of full-page newspaper ads in May asking for the federal government to implement policies to help alleviate the plight of the growing numbers of children living in poverty in Canada. About one in five children in Canada live in poverty. They met with Martin, at his request, on May 27 in Toronto.

Hope for a breakthrough

The Campaign, which is supported by faith and advocacy groups and includes several recipients of the Order of Canada and assorted clerics and activists, were looking forward to a breakthrough with the feds in reversing many of the cuts to social and health programs implemented in the last decade.

Though CACP member June Callwood expressed hope mixed with cynicism before the meeting, she felt that the public's attitude was changing.

"People thought that if you pushed people off welfare, they would go out and get jobs," she said in an interview. "But that can't happen without adequate child care. The problem is that whenever an issue around child poverty comes up in the media, it's a two-day wonder and then they go onto the next story."

She pointed to the choice of Ernie Eves as Progressive Conservative leader, and therefore Ontario premier, over Jim Flaherty, who advocated putting homeless people in jail if they refused to go to a shelter, as a sign that at least the people of Ontario have had enough of hardened attitudes towards poor people.

Gerald Vandezande, a volunteer spokesperson for the Campaign, expressed cautious hope after the meeting.

COURTESY JACQUIE MAUND

CACP member June Callwood

"Mr. Martin had two senior policy advisors with him and listened carefully to our suggestions," he said. "He also asked that we meet again in September."

Those who met with the former minister suggested a "three-legged stool" policy approach to eliminate child poverty. The suggestions are adequate income support, quality child care and affordable housing. Canada is the only G-7, and indeed the only industrialized, nation without a national housing program and yet the only one that boasts a surplus. Given this reality, Vandezande was hoping that the prime minister and finance minister would dedicate some of the surplus for social spending.

On June 2, all bets were off when the finance minister was ousted from his post after promising municipalities an active voice in the next budget and giving indications of sympathy with the aims of CACP.

"We weren't floating on clouds after our meeting with Mr. Martin," said Greg deGroot-Maggetti, socio-economic concerns co-ordinator with Citizens for Public Justice, a CACP supporter. "But it was a constructive meeting of setting goals and targets to reduce child poverty. As we were leaving, though, some of us said that if he left or became prime minister, it would really create uncertainty with our agenda."

He is assuming that the September meeting is cancelled and expressed frustration after spending considerable time and effort to get as far as they had and perhaps having to "start from scratch" with the new minister, John Manley.

"It's too early to know how things will shake out on policy issues," deGroot-Maggetti said. "My worry now is that John Manley has so many portfolios, deputy prime minister and minister of infrastructure as well as finance, he will be very busy and it will be a challenge to meet with him."

He also pointed to how bank economists are expressing concern about the deterioration of "social infrastructure" in Canada and pointing to how the country is spending less on social, health and education programs than it did 50 years ago. "In an advanced country such as Canada, it is remarkable that the government touts this as a great accomplishment, that we have made these cuts to social programs," deGroot-Maggetti asserted. "Social infrastructure such as old age security, child benefits and employment insurance are important for the life of cities because it helps lessen grinding poverty. It is important to have socially viable cities to keep Canada a viable country."

Editorial

Synod between two worlds

Harry der Nederlanden

I've never been to synod as a delegate, only as a reporter – for the Reformed Ecumenical Synod years ago and for CC the last three years. But I've talked with many delegates over the years, and most of them have been deeply impressed by the experience. In fact, quite a few spoke of it as a week-long high and a spiritual eye-opener. (No doubt, some who attended when women-in-office battles were being waged had a different experience.)

Synod exhilarating and impressive

But I think I understand why synod can be so exhilarating and impressive. To spend a week among committed people (mostly men, of course) talking about things central to the Kingdom of God and hearing stories about the numerous ventures here and abroad in which you as a member of the church are part – all this widens your horizons, focuses you on essentials, and fills your heart. For a time you see God's hereness and thereness, his inmixing with the lives of people hither and yon as clearly as rocks in a mountain stream.

After a few days in this atmosphere, your sense of priorities and sense of direction are fine-tuned and you feel like the athlete Paul wants you to be. (Your body, however, after a week of sitting and of eating rich meals in the Calvin commons, is another matter.) Though such spiritual highs tend to be temporary, they are none the less real for that.

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Scripture is realistic in terms of exposing the intransigence, pettiness and cruelty of mankind. But it is being no less realistic in carrying us upward to great heights as if on the wings of eagles.

I am free!

This was driven home to me a few Sundays ago as I stood among fellow church members singing, "Now I am free!" All across North America and in lands beyond, in Reformed, Lutheran, Baptist, Roman Catholic and Pentecostal churches people were standing side by side singing, "I am free!"

In Canada and the U.S. those words are almost clichés. We live in a democratic country and we say – all too glibly – that we are free. Why? Just because we can vote now and again? In too many parts of the world people are painfully aware they are not free. Especially when we focus on the church of Christ around the globe, we realize how exceptional is our circumstance. In a great many countries, too numerous to list here, believers come together to worship and to sing at great risk. At great risk not only to themselves but also to their families. They are decidedly not free.

Yet, when they are able to do so, they too join with us in singing, "I am free!" That's a remarkable thing. And then I think back to those noble clusters of black slaves on this continent not so many generations ago who also gathered in small groups to sing desperately, defiantly, "I am free!"

That thought made me aware that all around me stood people bound with chains of some kind, be they chains of alcoholism, of depression, of abuse or some more subtle enslavement, singing lustily, joyfully, "I am free!"

That's those crazy, pie-in-the-sky Christians for you. Even though you point to the chains on their wrists and ankles, they go on singing, "I am free! I am free!"

Aren't Rousseau and Marx right? Everywhere people are in chains – and often the invisible ones are every bit as strong as the iron ones – and the Christian faith fills them with the illusion that they are free. Not just free, but that they are more than conquerors, that the world is their oyster, that they are children of a god.

Christians see chains as clearly as anyone

Christians live in the same world as everyone else, and they see the chains as clearly as anyone. They know that bodies, minds and hearts are broken every day and that disease and death claim believer as well as unbeliever. Because they are part of the worldwide church of Christ, thousands of whom are being persecuted, jailed or killed every day, they know that evil has many faces and many disguises.

With Isaiah they say, "Justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us. We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows. Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like men without eyes.... We all growl like bears; we moan mournfully like doves. We look for justice but find none; for deliverance, but it is far away."

Yes, we know that reality. But at the same time we also know another reality – the reality of God's promises, of God's future, of the Kingdom that has been planted and that is sprouting in the midst of us. The Word of God gives us the *chutzpah* to contradict what is before our eyes and even what we feel in flesh and bone, the chains weighing us down and preventing our feet from dancing.

Isaiah again: "O afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundation with sapphires.... All your sons [and daughters] will be taught by the Lord, and great will be your children's peace. In righteousness you will be established; tyranny will be far from you; you will have nothing to fear. Terror will be far removed; it will not come near you."

From beginning to end Isaiah moves between visions, on the one hand, of death and destruction, and, on the other, of healing and liberation: "You have trusted in your wickedness and have said, 'No one sees me.' Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you when you say to yourself, 'I am, and there is none besides me.'" But then: "I will make peace your governor and righteousness your ruler. No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin and destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise."

Living between two realities

Christians live their lives between these realities, the reality of the fallen, violent world and the reality of the new world and the new humanity. Just because many cannot see the latter and just because there are times when we, too, lose sight of it like blind men, that does not mean it is not there. It is precisely because it is there glimmering on the horizon that we wail at the darkness and violence, protesting that it is not right, it is not our native element for we were made to live in love, harmony and peace.

When we sing, "I am free!" we proclaim a glaring contradiction, contrary to fact. It contradicts not only the "facts" of life of the prisoner and the persecuted; it contradicts the chains cutting into the flesh of each one of us. But this is the very nature of confession. It doesn't accept *what is* (so-called empirical reality) as the final truth. It looks beyond.

Christian eschatology, however, does not just look ahead like the futurologist, projecting present trends years forward. It is not future oriented in a linear way. It encounters a huge, unbridgeable gap between where and what we are and what we will be and where we will dwell. And in that gap, that chasm, stands the cross of Christ.

The cross exposes the bloody violence of all our attempts to renew and reshape the world according to our dreams and our powers, but it does not rob us of either our dreams or our power. It gives to both deeper foundations and wider horizons, gathering all peoples and nations into its embrace.

It makes life more difficult but also more hope-filled; it makes life more tormented but also more permeable to comfort and joy; it makes us smaller and humbler but also enormously bigger, for we become the organs — the eyes, the mouth, the hands and feet – of a god, for we, in our own respective churches are transplanted into the body of Christ. And when we gather together to speak and act in his name, we feel beating in our own veins the heartbeat of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Yes, at synod there are committee meetings, long reports, motions and debates, lists of names and columns of figures, but in and through it all there's that heartbeat. And the beating of eagles' wings. And the startling, stirring vision of a world being renewed. "I am free!"

Letters

The gospel is not for *Menschen*

(A response to "Conversing about conversion" by Bert Hielema, CC, June 3)

Like you, Mr. Editor, I am not quite at peace with Bert's article. But I am uncomfortable with the WWGHD argument — 'what would God have done' if his Son's sacrifice had not been necessary. Even if that necessity were in doubt, it is useless, as my friends Mark Ward and C.S. Lewis both say, to speculate about things that would have been.

But anyway, as I understand Bert, the question is not whether Jesus' sacrifice (including both his righteous life and his death), was necessary. It was. The question is how the benefits of this sacrifice accrue to individual human beings.

I'm certain that our subscription to certain theological propositions is *not* the agent of salvation. It's grace that saves us, it's the atoning sacrifice and life of Jesus that saves us, it is God, in his love and power, who saves us — something completely outside ourselves and our minds.

Saved from desperate straits

But might that act of God consist in filling us with an eagerness to be righteous? It includes that, but the gospel seems to be that first of all God fills us with an awareness that we are quite helpless to be righteous. Which is why the word *save* is used at all — *save* is reserved for people in utterly desperate straits. A person climbing a mountain doesn't need to be rescued just because the climb is long and arduous and involves repeated slides and stumbles. She needs to be rescued when she gets into a situation where any move she makes will cause her to plummet to her death. Or when she is buried by an avalanche, or cannot get breath into her lungs no matter how she tries, or is wedged at the bottom of a crevasse and can't get out.

The something that distinguishes someone who is (in the words of St. Paul) 'being saved' is not a striving to be righteous or successful at righteousness, but an awareness of helplessness, and an abandonment of oneself to the mercy of God. In my experience, this awareness, this abandonment, and the freedom that comes with it, the gift of mercy and love in Christ — the stripped-down gospel — *is* more than enough to overwhelm me with the awe, wonder, radical amazement, joy, and connectedness Bert mentions. And also with longing for the day when my salvation will be complete and I will meet the ideal that Christ holds up. The gospel is for sinners, sick people, me. It's not for *menschen* — if there really are such; if or when Bert meets his friend in heaven, both will see then what a real *mensch* is.

Our life is all trust

But maybe the biggest thing that holds me back from Bert's position is that I understand and experience salvation to be not about thinking and doing the right things so much as about relating to an actual Person. The same abandonment to his mercy and grace is not just for salvation from hell, but for living. The life of 'us who are being saved' is all trust — like the climber being rescued on the mountain. Not us giving, but us trusting. ("What shall I give unto the Lord for all his generosity to me? I shall *take* the cup of salvation.") And the Person we trust came in the flesh, lived and died and rose in space and time; people can say God has many names and many guises, but that can't be said about Jesus. And it is absolutely clear from the gospels that people who are presented with Jesus and reject that he is — not that he brings, but that he *is* — the revelation of God, are unable to have fellowship with God. Jesus himself said so.

I don't know where that leaves people who never are presented with Jesus. Perhaps just realizing their helplessness and casting themselves on the mercy of their Creator is enough for God to reveal to them all that they need in order to know and trust him. I also haven't solved the problem of why God gives faith and spiritual sight to some people and not to others.

There are many people pursuing and desiring virtue in this world. I think Bert reminds me that my focus should not be figuring out whether or not people around me are saved, but gratitude and admiration for whatever goodness is to be found, allowing myself to learn from anyone and everyone, and loving all my neighbors with the love of Christ — the love that hopes and believes all things for its object. And maybe that includes hoping and believing that my neighbor is being, or will be, saved. My business is not supposed to be to convert people, per se. My business, despite what I am often told from the pulpit, is not to bring people to church. It is just to give evidence in my words and deeds, to *be* evidence all over the place, that Christ is the Savior and the Lord. That's certainly more than enough to occupy me, and I can leave the rest to God.

And this is a reminder I need, so thank you, Bert.

Debbie Sawczak,
Georgetown, Ont.

Hielema's view saddened reader

Contrary to what Harry may think, Bert's article, Conversing about conversion (Christian Courier June 3, 2002) did not raise any hackles for this reader. It saddened and unsettled me.

I applaud CC for printing the article, because it seems Bert, with his increased cynicism and hopelessness (evident in his Nose column), is also searching for truth.

It was obvious from the article that Bert holds his friend in high esteem and cares about his eternal salvation. Therefore, I was hoping to find something in the Bible to support his belief that a man's willed goodness is sufficient to gain him access to God's eternal kingdom. I was unsuccessful.

Although his friend may exhibit qualities of love we so admire and approve of, "righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe," (Romans 3:22).

Dr. Hugh Ross, director of Reasons to Believe, believes there are certain biblical, non-negotiable truths basic to salvation. That Jesus is the Son of God, sent to this world to die for our redemption, is one such truth.

Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me" (John 14:6). He also states, "whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven" (Matthew 10:32).

God's ways and thoughts are so much higher

Our human idea of justice, mercy and love is just that — human. God's ways and thoughts are so much higher. Thank God for his Holy Spirit, his Word, his creation, for through them we can know God's eternal power and divine nature.

I encourage Bert to point his friend to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. And that he may pray for his deliverance, for only the truth (Jesus Christ) can set his friend free. May God bless you, Bert, and your friend with eyes to see his truth.

Irene Vander Spruit,
Stirling, Ont.

Should churches have political speech protection?

Do we agree that Houses of Worship should have "political speech protection"? (See CC, June 3, p.9) Should we as the institutional church be so concerned with furthering our political views about the welfare of our nation and thus endanger the cause of Christ's Kingdom?

The responsibility of the institutional church in this regard is to speak prophetically, not politically, to personal, familial and civic issues. Canadians with the Kuyperian perspective on sphere responsibility have done very well in speaking to such issues on biblical grounds in non-ecclesiastical associations. That is how it should be. God has called us as the body of Christ to be his agency, speaking and working for him who is the Lord of all of life.

Of course, the government has no right to put a "gag order" on that prophetic voice. Neither is it appropriate for the Rev. Anonymous to use his pulpit or a number of others to further certain political ends. The church should uphold and maintain those bounds. Thereby we help to maintain justice for all God-ordained institutions.

Arthur Davies
Holland, Mich.

Correction:

In our June 17 issue (page 11), Christian Courier *printed a biography for Co Vanderlaan describing him as a retired employee of the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC). Actually, Vanderlaan continues to be an active employee of CLAC.* Christian Courier *apologizes for the error.*

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News/Environment

Globalization and the social question

ROME (Zenit.org) — Antonio Fazio, governor of the Bank of Italy got together with the academic staff of the Regina Apostolorum Pontifical Athenaeum in May to discuss the question of globalization and the Church's social teaching.

The theme examined was "Globalization, Economic Progress and Poverty Reduction." Starting from the premise, contained in Pope Paul VI's encyclical "Populorum Progressio," that the benefits of economic progress must be spread to all peoples, Fazio observed that the second half of the 20th century saw a dramatic increase in per capita income in many countries. But some regions made only limited gains, while others lost ground.

In Latin America, due to political instability and economic inequalities, progress has been sporadic. Advances in some Asian countries has been marginal, and in Africa the situation is even worse. The free trade in goods and finance in recent years has enabled a very large increase in production and wealth, but, notes Fazio, mainly for countries already established within the world trade system. Insofar as trade in manufactured goods is concerned, the advantages were concentrated in economies that were at the medium to high level of technology.

When it comes to finance, in recent years recurrent crises have afflicted developing countries in Asia, Latin America and elsewhere. This has led to a worsening in the standard of living, and restoring economic equilibrium has often meant sacrifices in wage levels and heavier tax burdens.

State intervention

Fazio defended the role of free enterprise in industry and finance, as "indispensable for economic progress at both the national and international level." But, he warned, "it is not sufficient for balanced development." The market, he said, needs "to be regulated and guided with policies that, while respecting freedom of enterprise, correct its distortions and shortcomings."

A limitation of the free market system, he noted, is that the theory of human behavior underlying it is that of individualism and utilitarianism. But economic activity needs an institutional framework that provides the public goods indispensable for the conduct of civil and economic affairs.

The state, therefore, provides goods that are directed toward the common good. Moreover, in order for the market to promote the welfare of all, the state has a role in ensuring that inefficiency and corruption do not harm society. State intervention in the economy is also necessary in order to stimulate economic activity in times of economic weakness, Fazio contended. Another field for the state is to ensure a better distribution of the benefits of economic progress, not always guaranteed in sufficient measure by the market, noted Fazio. This intervention is needed not only at the national, but also the international level.

How to help poor countries

Even while defending the role of government in the economy, the Italian central bank governor clearly recognized that a mere redistribution of existing resources is not the answer to improving living standards in poor countries. "Only rapid economic growth can bring a widespread improvement in living standards," he affirmed.

To achieve higher growth, poorer nations need to apply methods of production used in advanced economies, with appropriate adjustments. One way to help this process is to promote the spread of technological progress to the less advanced economies, noted Fazio. More effort needs to be made at the international level to transmit knowledge, with due respect to intellectual property rights.

Openness to commerce is another key factor in promoting development. In fact, "the countries whose economies have grown fastest are those that have had greater access to international trade," he said.

Fazio called upon the richer nations to dismantle their protectionist policies for agricultural products and textiles in order to help developing nations increase their exports. He also said that a new multilateral trade round is needed to lessen tensions in international commerce and avoid the exclusion of some countries from regional agreements.

Political response better than violence

He was also critical of some parts of the anti-global movement. "Forms of violence offering no constructive proposals must be isolated," he said. Rather, he called for a political response to rectify the "imbalances that globalization has created."

Debt relief for developing countries, Fazio noted, can help break the vicious circle "in which the payment of interest and the redemption of principal absorb a substantial proportion of the resources a country produces." He insisted, however, that relief should be conditional on the implementation of structural reforms in order to guarantee that future capital flows will be used more efficiently.

Yet economic reforms are not enough, he observed. Development in the welfare of countries will occur only if there is also "a parallel development of rights that are fundamental for human dignity."

Among the areas where rights need to be guaranteed, Fazio mentioned the elimination of child labor, slavery and trafficking in humans. Support for household incomes and assuring school attendance are also important.

The last part of the address by the Italian banker concerned the role of the Church's social teaching in today's globalized world. The sweeping changes in recent years "lead us to question the adequacy of economic and social ideologies based exclusively on the pursuit of profits by firms and individual participants in the market," observed

See LINK *page 8...*

Biotechnology demands a response

Creation waits...

John Wood

Genetic engineering is in the news once again. The Supreme Court of Canada is deliberating a patent application for a genetically altered "oncomouse". The real news is that the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and the Canadian Council of Churches both oppose patenting higher life forms. And in the U.S., *Christianity Today* weighs in this month with a feature interview of Leon Kass, head of the President's Council on Bioethics. In it he notes that many in the public "see that in some way the human future is at stake in these questions". Together these events are raising the biomedical and bio-technical revolutions as an important debate in the church and society.

A remarkable convergence of medical, agricultural, and environmental concerns is occurring when we debate these technologies. New developments are announced every day. Just last month, for instance, the first genetic map for rice was published. And the combined molecular developments in the biological sciences over the past three decades are rapidly bearing commercial fruit. As Nobel Laureate Norman Borlaug has said, the development of transgenic varieties and hybrids with herbicide tolerance promises "not only lower production costs; it also has important environmental advantages." The movement of this new technology into agriculture has been incredibly fast. And in that speedy dissemination lies much uncertainty.

Patenting the world

My concern as these debates proceed is that we see them too narrowly. Biomedical concerns cannot simply be reduced to our treatment of humans. Kass, for instance, suggests that bioethics is merely "the domain of difficulties that arise when human life… is challenged by ideas and practices coming from modern biomedical and technology." But this won't do at all. The very technological insights we are debating have been developed in animal and plant models. Not only are these creatures the experimental systems we depend upon, but we now know that we share much of our very genome with creatures as lowly as the virus. This intimate link with the rest of the biological world demands a comprehensive response.

Minding more than mere matter

But the concern goes beyond mere genetic similarity. This genetic correspondence could, after all, be merely a coincidence. But when we lose touch with our relation with the rest of creation, we are in danger of losing the ability to distinguish between right and wrong with respect to humans. This is the point that religious commentators are making in the current debate. And here is where a renewed Biblical view of creatures can help us. It is time to rediscover the relational nature of the creation. For too long we have passively accepted the Enlightenment view of creation. The world of plants and animals has been reduced to mere matter – stuff. It has little or no intrinsic value in and of itself. You would hardly know, on this view, why God would care to notice when a sparrow falls.

Our ethical decisions need to be re-grounded in a theocentric view of the world. This is a place where creatures are worth something first of all because of their relationship to the creator, not primarily because of their worth to us. If we begin to see that God cares for his creatures, we may have some light to shine on the questions of how we should treat these same creatures with our new found technological insights. But often today we turn these questions on their head. We begin with mere technique, by asking what is this thing good for to us? In the end we find that with this view even humans become the mere stuff of technique.

Ode and implications

When they announced the cloning of a tadpole in 1967, I barely noticed.
And when they came to patent the oil-eating bacterial line, I thought I understood the importance of this new breakthrough.
Next, they marketed enhanced corn plants with herbicide resistance, and I cheered.
So when they came to patent the genetically modified mouse, and to clone a sheep, and then to engineer a goat to give spider's silk, it seemed somehow only natural.
But when they came to clone me, I was shocked.
Yet why should I be so? Isn't it, after all, only the normal progression of science and technology?

Perhaps these few lines can help us see that in treating the creatures as mere props, we leave ourselves vulnerable as well. God help us gain new insight today.

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College, Edmonton.

Does charity have a price?

David Vander Woerd

One of the pleasures of being a lawyer is seeing the good side of people. It is always heartening to see how many people give money to charitable causes.

One of the more enjoyable tasks that I have in meeting with my clients relates to estate planning and wills. It is during the course of taking instructions for wills that I am often allowed to get a glimpse into the hearts of my clients, and I am pleased to report that, contrary to public belief, there are a lot of good people out there.

Many people believe that a will is a simple document. Will kits and do-it-yourself packages have fed this perception. Our liability insurance carrier knows differently.

Exploding area of law

Will and estate planning is an area of the law that is exploding, and the transfer of wealth that will occur as the baby boomer population in this country turns over in the next 40 years will be staggering. As in most things in life, and certainly in the law business, everything is becoming more complicated. Wills and estate planning is no different.

Take, for example, what one would think is a simple task — giving to charity in your will. For many people, this is a common end goal for their wealth, in light of changes to the *Income Tax Act* that have raised giving limits, coupled with philanthropic motivations. One would think this should be an easy task. But think again.

Philanthropy is a common reason for people to leave money to charity in your will. However, an equally compelling reason may be the tax planning benefits that your estate will enjoy when the gift is made. Many people are convinced of the merit of giving to charity when they learn that the tax receipt that the gift generates can offset a tax burden that the estate would otherwise have to bear. If this is the reason your estate is making that gift, but your will is improperly drafted, the deduction could be denied, and your beneficiaries will lose out.

Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) has denied gifts given by will when the residue of an estate was to be divided among such registered charities as chosen by the trustees. CCRA denied the deduction because the "name of the charity and the amount of the gift" were not clearly stated in the will.

This is reinforced in an information bulletin, a non-binding interpretation of the law by CCRA, which said that where, at the time of the donation, the residue cannot specifically be determined, such as when the trustee has a right to encroach on the capital of the trust, no deduction or tax credit in respect of the donation will be allowed.

Hardline stance

This hardline stance by CCRA seemed to collide directly with other initiatives to encourage greater philanthropy through increasing of allowable charitable giving limits. The lawyers in Ontario have commenced an onslaught to have the CCRA position corrected. You will be happy to know the CCRA has listened. Here's what happened.

Gravity of repercussions

CCRA was bombarded by opposition to its position. The gravity of the repercussions was apparent. So CCRA began to budge on its position. It started in a letter dated March 8, 2001, in which it conceded that if a will stipulates a specific amount that is to be gifted to charity and names a list of charities that the trustees can give the gift to, the donation will qualify for deduction.

This still did not sit well, because the deductibility of gifts left in a will for charitable causes for charities chosen by the trustees that were not specifically listed in the will remained in question. More pressure was put on CCRA to make these gifts deductible. On April 11, 2002 CCRA acquiesced. They published an Information Circular which said that they expected that in the majority of cases, the testator would have identified specific charities. When this occurred, there was no concern of a denial of the deduction. However, even when the charities were not named, "it is now our view that this, in itself, would not necessarily preclude the donation from otherwise qualifying as a gift by will."

The law is a fluid thing. For most people, a will governs where a lifetime of earning and savings will go. Why one would cut corners in preparing a will that could fritter away a lifetime of work is hard understand. Protect your investments by planning properly so that you and your beneficiaries will reap maximum benefit.

David van der Woerd is a partner at Ross & McBride, practicing in commercial and real estate law, with a special interest in charity law. He is also a part-time instructor of Business Law at Redeemer University College.

Thousands go hungry as militants block food distribution in Zimbabwe

HARARE, Zimbabwe (ENI) — Thousands of villagers in the Zimbabwean province of Matabeleland are going hungry since militants of the country's ruling political party disrupted a Roman Catholic Church feeding program for schoolchildren and expectant mothers.

CRWRC

Corn waiting to be distributed by aid agencies in southern Africa

Villagers in the drought-prone region of Binga had been living on handouts from the Catholic Church and the UK Save the Children Fund since last year.

But in May, Ignatius Chombo, the minister of local government, public works and national housing, ordered Zimbabwe's Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) to discontinue its food aid program because "it has structures similar to the government's.

"What authority are they using to set up structures parallel to those of the government?" Chombo queried, warning that the church organization would be "banned" if it ignored the directive.

Food production sabotaged

Zimbabwe is experiencing serious food shortages due to severe drought which has affected most of southern Africa. In addition, government-backed farm invasions in Zimbabwe have sabotaged food production, undermining the country's once-thriving agricultural industry.

After Chombo's threats in May, veterans of Zimbabwe's 1970s liberation war and militants of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF) political party's youth brigades camped outside the CCJP warehouse in Binga, threatening to destroy trucks bringing food for distribution by the commission's relief program.

Bishop Robert Ndlovu, spokesperson for the Catholic diocese of Hwange, yesterday told ENI that following the militants' threats, the church had stopped distributing food to thousands of expectant mothers at hospitals and more than 35,000 children at dozens of primary schools and pre-schools.

"We are surprised by the government's and war veterans' attitude because we have nothing to do with politics," Bishop Ndlovu said. "What is political about feeding the poor and hungry, especially when you do it transparently and with the district administrator's full knowledge?"

The bishop said it was unclear whether the militants were acting on the government's orders.

The CCJP has often been attacked by the government over alleged political interference. In 1997, the CCJP, along with Zimbabwe's Legal Resources Foundation (LRF), published a report detailing atrocities committed mostly by a unit of the army on civilians in Matabeleland and the Midlands in the early 1980s in which thousands of people were killed.

In the run-up to the country's presidential election last March, the Zimbabwean government banned charities and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from distributing food except through government channels.

The government alleged that some NGOs were using food to build support for the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in the election. The opposition, however, has accused the Zanu PF party of punishing people who voted for the MDC by denying them food aid.

Children have stopped attending school

Joseph Mwiinde, a resident of the Binga village of Siyachilaba, told ENI that while in operation, the Catholic Church's feeding program had "greatly" reduced the rate of school truancy in the district. With the program suspended, the rate has risen again.

"Many children have stopped going to school because of hunger and now spend their time looking for maize [corn]," Mwiinde said.

He told ENI some villagers had gone for days without a square meal, surviving on wild roots and boiled herbs.

About six million people — more than half of the nation's population — need food aid, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization and the World Food Program said in a joint statement issued on May 29, and many more are expected to need aid by the end of the year.

Link between economic and political freedom

... continued from page 6

Fazio. He also gave credit to the role of trade and finance, saying that they contributed to the advance of democracy in the second half of the 20th century. "Economic freedom proceeds in parallel with political freedom," Fazio said.

Innovations are positive

Echoing the opening words of Leo XII's founding social encyclical, "Rerum Novarum," Fazio stated that "new things" still characterize contemporary society. Innovations are transforming not only the advanced countries, but will also lead to major changes in developing nations. This is something positive, he argued, because social and economic progress can lift hundreds of millions out of poverty.

On the downside, these changes can also foment subjection and marginalization within societies and at the international level, he said. Moreover, they can overthrow the existing social order where culture and tradition are weak.

To confront these challenges we need a "strong philosophy," Fazio commented. This includes a solid base in economics and political realities, combined with a fruitful interchange between secular knowledge and philosophy and theology.

His conclusion: "We must read the present with the aid of a vast and deep knowledge of the economic and social phenomena that characterize it, and in the light of the ancient and ever-new wisdom abundantly 'deposited' in the Church."

Church

New U.S. Catholic guidelines on sexual abuse stop short of defrocking

Chris Herlinger

NEW YORK, N.Y. (ENI) — U.S. Roman Catholic bishops continue to face criticism after adopting new guidelines at an unprecedented meeting meant to stem a widening sexual abuse scandal.

Critics say the long-awaited guidelines do not go far enough in their prescriptions for priests who commit child sexual abuse and do not address what many Catholic laity say is at the heart of the scandal: the response of the bishops when confronted with problem clergy.

Deeply rooted problem

"The bishops still want to believe this is a 'bad apple problem'," David Clohessy, director of the Chicago-based Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), told ENI. "It's not. It's a deeply rooted cultural and structural problem in the church."

At least 250 American priests have been suspended or have resigned since January, following allegations of sexual abuse.

The cornerstone of the guidelines, adopted June 14 at an unprecedented meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Dallas, Texas, is a call for removing from public ministry any priest who has abused a minor, meaning the priest would not be able to publicly perform mass or wear clerical garb.

The guidelines also require church officials to report any incident of abuse to law-enforcement authorities.

The bishops stopped short, however, of taking the step of requiring offending priests to be defrocked — known in formal terms as "laicization" — because, the bishops indicated, it could be a lengthy and complicated process.

A priests' group, however, expressed concern that under the new guidelines, innocent priests could be unfairly accused of abuse.

AP PHOTO/L. M. OTERO

David Clohessy, director of the Chicago-based Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), holds a photo of Eric Patterson, who committed suicide after allegedly being abused by a priest.

Driven by public sentiment

"The policy is driven a lot more by public sentiment than the principle of compassion," said the Rev. Robert Silva, head of the National Federation of Priests' Councils, as quoted by the Associated Press.

In approving the guidelines — known as the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People — on a 239-13 vote, the bishops insisted they had adopted the "zero-tolerance" policy the public had den anded.

But critics s id they were disappointed the bi: ops did not insist that priests wh o had abused children be defrocl:ed.

"People can still call [the priest] 'Father', which terrifies the [victims]," the Chicago-based reform group Call to Action said in a statement.

Critics were not satisfied either that the bishops took no action — even symbolically — that might force the resignation of bishops who had reassigned sex offenders from one parish to another.

Resignations called for

Grass-roots groups such as SNAP that criticized the bishops urged not only the dismissal of clergy who engaged in sexual abuse but also the resignation of any bishop or cardinal who covered up abuse or transferred priests from one parish to another.

A devastating report by the Dallas Morning News that greeted the bishops upon their arrival in Dallas indicated that approximately two-thirds of the nation's Roman Catholic diocesan leaders had protected abusing priests in what the newspaper called a "systematic practice that spans decades and continues today."

The anger at the Dallas meeting was palpable, with the bishops hearing from victims as well as lay critics who condemned the Catholic hierarchy. In one of the most searing moments, Clohessy displayed a photograph of a victim of abuse who had later killed himself.

Laity at the meeting spoke of a lack of accountability in U.S. Catholic dioceses and of their frustration that lay people had been isolated by the church hierarchy.

"Whatever the causes of the scandal, the fact is that the dam has broken," Margaret O'Brien Steinfels, the editor of Commonweal, a New York-based Catholic magazine, told the bishops.

Reservoir of trust run dry

"A reservoir of trust among Catholics has run dry. This scandal has brought home to lay people how essentially powerless they are to affect its outcome — and virtually anything else to do with the church," she said.

Bishop Wilton Gregory of Belleville, Illinois, the head of the U.S. bishops' conference, acknowledged the church's mishandling of the problem and apologised to the victims and to the U.S. laity.

"Both what we have done and what we have failed to do contributed to the sexual abuse of children and young people by clergy and church personnel," he said. "To each of you — and in the name of all the bishops — I offer a profound apology for the hurt and the embarrassment you have suffered. We ask your forgiveness."

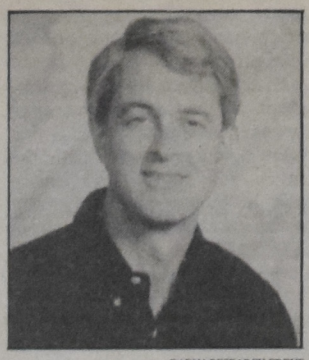
Many American Christians believe Jesus sinned while on earth, says poll

VENTURA, Calif. (EP) — A low percentage of Americans attend church weekly, according to research by George Barna published in his new book *The State of the Church: 2000.*

Barna research shows that fewer than one out of three adults attend church every week. The 2002 data revealed that weekly church attendance stayed at a steady 43 per cent among adults, up from a five-year low of 40 per cent. While church attendance saw a spike immediately following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the rate returned to normal within a few weeks.

A Barna Research statement noted that the low attendance numbers were "partially due to a noteworthy decline in regularity among Catholics." The statement added, "The explosion in the number and quality of lifestyle diversions, combined with the nationwide decline in acceptance of rules and absolutes, has diminished people's sense of commitment and spiritual urgency regarding worship participation."

Barna's research shows that the number of unchurched adults in America has increased considerably since the early 1990s. In 1991, just 24 per cent of adults were considered unchurched, meaning they had not attended a regular church service in the past six months (not including a funeral, wedding or other special church ceremony). By contrast, a decade later 34 per cent of adults are considered unchurched. Barna attributes the rise to decreased church attendance among Baby Boomers, women, Hispanics, and residents of the nation's Northeast and West coast.



BARNA RESEARCH GROUP

George Barna

Barna also found that currently only about 50 per cent of adults who call themselves Christians say they are "absolutely committed" to the Christian faith. While that number has remained steady since 1996, one significant finding was that only 38 per cent of the "Baby Buster" generation (the one following the Baby Boomers) claimed to be committed Christians. Noted Barna, "That statistic is not only the lowest figure among any of the four adult generations and way below the national norm, but it is consistent with the low levels of spiritual investment among young adults."

Barna explained that while young adults are typically comfortable with making faith a part of their lifestyles, "the data portray Busters to be generally disinterested in typical faith pursuits, long-accepted Christian beliefs and long-standing religious events and institutions."

A shocking finding

One shocking finding from Barna's survey was that millions of Americans who claim to be Christians believe that Jesus was sinful like the rest of humanity. Presently 25 per cent "strongly agree" that Jesus Christ sinned while he was on earth. Another 19 per cent agree with that notion somewhat less emphatically. Barna found that eight per cent "somewhat disagree" that Jesus Christ was sinful, and only 40 per cent of those surveyed "strongly disagree" that while "he lived on earth, Jesus Christ committed sins...." Eight per cent of those claiming to be Christians were not sure what to think. Barna noted that if the "'agree' and 'disagree' opinions are combined and compared, the survey suggests that 44 per cent agree that Jesus sinned and 48 per cent reject that notion."

Young adults were most likely to say that Jesus sinned, according to Barna's findings. Catholics were slightly more likely to have this view than were Protestants, and, among Protestants, those attending mainline churches were more likely to strongly agree that Jesus was sinful on earth than those attending congregations not considered mainline.

Among non-evangelical born-again Christians, some 20 per cent "strongly agree" that Christ sinned, while nearly 13 per cent agree less emphatically, and six per cent "somewhat disagree." Another five per cent are not sure what to believe. Noted Barna, "In other words, nearly half of the non-evangelical born-again segment (46 per cent) did not strongly disagree with the notion that Christ sinned."

Barna said that perhaps the most surprising revelation from data in The State of the Church: 2000 is "the paradox of living in a culture defined by constant change, with a nation of people who admit to confusion regarding purpose, meaning and truth, and yet finding that there has been no real change in the spiritual views and endeavors of the people. Layer on top of that the fact that churches have raised and spent more than $500 billion dollars in the past decade to try to influence America's spiritual life and it seems pretty obvious that it takes more than good intentions and a menu of popular programs to make a dent in the nation's religious identity and consciousness."

The State of the Church: 2000 is available from the Barna Research Group (**www.barna.org**).

Church

Religion, ethnicity, politics divide Africa's most populous nation

Obed Minchakpu

JOS, Nigeria (Compass) — Religious and ethnic violence between Muslims and Christians continued to plague Nigeria in May and June, and tensions increased in several states over the use of Islamic law.

The Plateau state capital of Jos was again engulfed in bloodshed on May 2 as Muslims and Christians clashed during elections and ward congresses of Nigeria's ruling Peoples Democratic Party. The congresses, which previously had been suspended, had been rescheduled for May 2 when violence flared, leading to heavy casualties.

ST. FRANCIS EDU WEBSITE

A marketplace in Lago, Nigeria.

At least 100 persons were feared dead in a manner reminiscent of 10 days of Muslim-Christian rioting in Jos that began on September 7, 2001, and left almost 1,000 dead.

Hospitals full of wounded

Local hospitals were reported to be full of wounded from the recent conflict. Dr. Daniel Iya, the chief medical director of Jos University Teaching Hospital, who was among the medical personnel that had to attend to the victims, told Compass, "There are mass casualties and of course fatalities." But he did not have specific figures.

The crisis started in the Eto Baba area in the Angwan Rukuba ward of the city. Sources said a misunderstanding arose among the voters and the officials when some Muslim extremists arrived. The extremists began throwing stones. Pandemonium ensued as people began to flee. The violence then spread to other parts of Jos.

Tensions between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria have increased dramatically during the last three years as at least 12 states in northern Nigeria have begun implementing Islamic law.

Christians protest forced Muslim dress code

Christian leaders in Bauchi state have protested the imposition of the Islamic mode of dress, which includes forcing Christian nurses and midwives to wear trousers while working at the Federal Medical Center in Azare.

In a strongly worded statement on May 3, Iliya Chiroma and Daniel Laya, chairman and secretary of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in Bauchi, pleaded with the federal government through its health ministry to "quickly intervene in order to reduce the unnecessary religious tensions this act has generated in the centre in particular and the state in general."

"When Christian nurses and midwives protested this bizarre order by arguing that Christianity abhors the wearing of trousers by women, they were initially placed on suspension before their appointments were terminated," the statement said. "All the 21 Christian female staff of the medical center had their appointments terminated for their continued refusal to dress in accordance with sharia (Islamic) mode of dressing."

Meanwhile in northern Taraba state, Dr. Ibrahim Datti Ahmed, Nigeria's chairman of the National Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria, called on state government to introduce Islamic law or face the wrath of the Muslims in the state.

Ahmed told the Taraba State House of Assembly that since 12 other states in northern Nigeria had adopted and are implementing Islamic law, it was desirable to implement sharia for the Muslim community in the state.

"The Muslims in the state would be sending a bill to the state legislature for the introduction of sharia because the system is the desire of every Muslim," Ahmed said. "Christians should understand that sharia is purely a Muslim legal system and, as such, they should not kick against it for selfish reasons."

Mallam Husseini Ibrahim, a Muslim and the speaker of the legislature said, "Under a democratic system, citizens have the right to demand for what is good for them, provided it is within the provision of the constitution." He promised Muslim members of the legislature would endorse the bill.

Islamic law has serious consequences for Christians in areas where it is entrenched. Seventy-five Christians were arrested in different parts of Niger state in central Nigeria for opposing the state's Islamic law.

Thirteen of the arrested Christians have been prosecuted while the cases of 20 others are pending in Islamic courts. In 130 operations carried out by the Islamic Law Enforcement Board in May, fines totaling $50,000 were levied for offenses such as being in possession of beer.

Christian girls arrested for not being married

Eight unmarried Christian girls were arrested for not being married after having passed the marriageable age of 13 years prescribed by Islamic law. As a result, they were accused of being prostitutes. Two of the Christian girls arrested at Kagara have been charged, while the cases of three others in Makera are still being investigated.

Alhaji Mohammed Awal Bida, the chairman of the enforcement board, told Compass, "The law must take its course. Justice must prevail. Nobody is above the law, irrespective of his or her religion."

Muslim rebels hinder evangelism

But Islamic law is not the only problem Christians have faced during the last few years. Raids by Muslim rebels from neighboring Chad, especially in the northern part of Borno state in northern Nigeria, has impeded evangelism in the area, according the Rt. Rev. Emmanuel Kanu Mani, Anglican bishop of Maiduguri.

The bishop was on an aggressive rural evangelism program, which his church embarked on earlier this year.

He told Compass on June 2 at St. John's Anglican Church in the border town of Mallam Fatori that the rebels from Chad were harassing Christians, killing some and looting their property. Evangelization efforts are impeded. Mani said that because of the raids, many clergymen could not move around, and some living in the area were forced to flee.

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, is almost evenly split between Christians and Muslims. Muslims predominate in the north and Christians in the south.

Many First World nations didn't attend UN food summit

ROME (Zenit.org) — The Vatican's permanent observer at the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said June's food summit was in itself positive, even though most industrialized countries didn't attend.

In an evaluation of the meeting, Monsignor Agostino Marchetto said, "The fact that we met together to discuss such important problems and to renew the commitments made in 1996, must be assessed positively."

"In evaluating such an event, one must ask the question: And if it hadn't been held? Despite its dark and weak aspects, in any event, it attempts to respond to the scandal of 815 million people who suffer hunger in the world," Marchetto added, "The summit was not attended by the principal chiefs of state and government. And this surely denotes lack of interest. Indeed, when one is concerned, one is present."

Hunger battle can be won

Regarding the use of genetically modified foods, he said, "The hunger battle can be won without taking recourse to them. However, this does not mean being closed to the progress of human science — when the latter is combined with concern for the good of the community and respects biodiversity."

The June 10-13 summit in Rome brought together 6,613 participants from 181 countries; 74 heads of state and government; 1,000 organizations (including 550 nongovernmental ones); and 1,600 journalists. Jacques Diouf, FAO's director general, lamented that the press did not give an accurate picture of the summit.

"How can it be said that the summit was useless?" Diouf asked. "For the first time, we were able to study concrete matters and initiate food safety programs in 69 countries."

Bad political sign

He admitted, however, that important leaders were missing. "Many chiefs of state of the Pacific, Africa and Latin America came — and too few from the rich world. I do not think it is a good political sign."

Many commentators said there were no concrete, binding and serious decisions resulting from the meeting. The only certainty is that the goal envisioned by the 1996 summit — to halve the number of the world's hungry by 2015 — is proving elusive. Diouf called on the international community to commit $24 billion voluntarily to reach the goal.

Evangelical churches closed in Eritrea

ERITREA (Compass) — The Eritrea government recently closed all Christian churches in the country other than the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Mekane Yesus (Lutheran) denominations, SIM reported. SIM, an evangelical Protestant organization, said it received the news on May 21 from the U.S. Embassy in Eritrea. Eritrea's Constitution allows for freedom of religion, and the population of slightly more Muslims than Christians has enjoyed good inter-religious relations in the past.

The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) reported on May 30 that the dominant Eritrean Orthodox Church could be responsible for pressuring the government to close the churches "in the wake of what appears to be a budding revival movement occurring within the traditional Orthodox community." The WEA report indicated, however, that the situation is quite complex. Pressure could also be coming from outside Muslim forces. The political and military situation is volatile, and the influx of sects has increased tensions in the country.

Peace & Conflict

General Romeo Dallaire visits Redeemer Christian High

Note: The following four stories were written by students of Redeemer Christian High School, in Ottawa, and are focused on that school's Special Emphasis Seminar: Youth and Armed Conflict held in late May.

PHOTOS FROM REDEEMER CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL, OTTAWA. COURTESY PATTY SCHUURMAN

Canadian General Romeo Dallaire gave the keynote address at Redeemer Christian High School's seminar on Youth and Armed Conflict.

Carina Oueis and Elena Merritt

Redeemer Christian High School, in Ottawa, was privileged to have as our guest Canadian General Romeo Dallaire. to give the keynote address during the Special Emphasis Seminar: *Youth and Armed Conflict* held on May 16, 2002. All those who attended — students, staff, members of the community and guests — were challenged by General Dallaire's moving presentation.

Interesting and shocking information

In an interview with General Dallaire following his presentation to Redeemer Christian High School students, we were able to uncover interesting and shocking information from General Dallaire concerning his experiences in Rwanda as a peacekeeper.

In 1994, General Dallaire led the international peacekeeping mission in Rwanda, an African country undergoing terrible internal problems. General Dallaire's peacekeeping mission was directed by the United Nations (UN). While General Dallaire was the commander of the UN peacekeeping force in Rwanda, certain circumstances restricted the mission's ability to bring peace to the country. These included a small peacekeeping force, which the UN reduced even more after the Belgium UN delegates were killed. Due to these restrictions, General Dallaire and his peacekeeping force did not have the power to do much to stop the killing in the country. Instead they could only watch the horrors of the Rwandan Genocide unfold. In 100 days, eight hundred thousand native people were killed in Rwanda.

Are some more human than others?

In his address, General Dallaire always came back to the theme: Are all humans human, or are some more human than others? He provided real-life examples and situations that demonstrated how little a Rwandan life was worth to some people. In essence, every life is an awesome gift from our Creator and each one equally demands respect and dignity.

General Dallaire's description of the horrible realities which have occurred in Rwanda and other Third World countries have changed many people in Canada and other western countries who did not realize the horrors they underwent. In our interview with General Dallaire, we were grateful to be able to learn first-hand from such an intelligent and courageous man.

RCHS Students: ***What inspired you to be part of the United Nations peacekeeping missions?***

General Dallaire: Being in the Canadian army. Not only for fighting, but for the advancement of social and human rights. Also, commanding a force.

RCHS Students: ***Who encouraged you to be a peacekeeper?***

General Dallaire: I was influenced primarily by two people. The first was my father, who was a non-commissioned officer. The second was my father- in- law, who was an officer in the Canadian Forces.

RCHS Students: ***Do you believe the United Nations has done a good job regarding peacekeeping?***

General Dallaire: The UN has done as good of a job as the sovereign nations have permitted it to do. There are limitations with the UN, such as the sovereign nations giving it the resources and people. Despite these limitations, the UN has accomplished many things.

RCHS Students: ***Have you ever felt that peace was impossible in Third World countries such as Rwanda?***

General Dallaire: I am an optimist and believe in human life. However, one night during a genocide, which is a massacre of certain groups of people, I was listening to the dying voices. As I listened in despair, I felt a presence that made me feel confident and secure through the horror.

RCHS Students: ***How do you believe students can help with the terrible events, such as occurred in Rwanda, that are happening in the world today?***

General Dallaire: Students can become more aware of non-governmental organizations which bring help to Third World countries. Students can help the children in these Third World countries through activities and projects of the non-governmental organizations.

Through the interview with Canadian General Romeo Dallaire on behalf of the Redeemer Christian High School Community, and his keynote address, we learned unforgettable, eye-opening information which will change our outlook on the world forever. We will be unable to forget that only 12 hours away by airplane other young people live in life-threatening, horrible conditions. General Dallaire called on Redeemer Christian High School students and other able students like us to help eliminate the horrors of war and conflict.

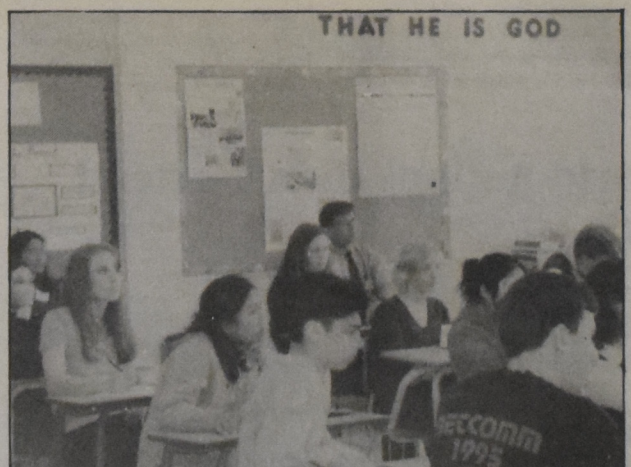
Children in war-torn countries tell their stories through art

Julia MacDonald

All of us participated in the Special Emphasis Seminar last week. Though some of us probably didn't want to (that included me), I think we all learned something. And yes, it did take us out of our comfort zone, but sometimes, that is the best way to engrave something on your heart. I know I'm never going to forget what I saw.

Ms. Linda Dale talked to us about children in war-torn countries and how drawing helps them to tell their story. And she showed us the pictures. At first, all most of us saw was squiggles and lines and colors. But when we looked a layer deeper, we also saw pain, and hurt, and anguish.

These pictures gave us a view of war that we can never even hope to understand. In our world, we read one article on the front of the daily newspaper, or we watch one 30-second news clip on TV, and then we change the channel to Much Music, or we hop in the car and go to the mall. We could take all the art classes in the world, but we would never be able to draw something like that. That could only be drawn by someone who has truly experienced hell on earth.



Students listen with interest to speakers at the seminar on Youth and Armed Conflict.

The day will come

But the day will come. The day will come when all the pain and hurt and anguish will be wiped from the face of the earth, along with the Prince of Darkness. When there will be no more fear, hunger, violence, sickness, or death. We know this because God has said it in his word: "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

We also know that things are going to change because there are wonderful people that God has chosen (even though they may not know it) who work through wonderful organizations to make a difference: "The day will come when nations will be judged not by their military or economic strength, nor by the splendor of their capital cities and public buildings, but by the well-being of their peoples; by their levels of health, nutrition and education; by their opportunities to earn a fair reward for their labors; by their ability to participate in the decisions that affect their lives; by the respect that is shown for their civil and political liberties; by the provision that is made for those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged; and by the protection that is afforded to the growing minds and bodies of their children." (Progress of Nations, 1998, UNICEF).

Hey, who knows? Maybe God has chosen you to make a difference while you're here on earth. Maybe he's speaking to your heart. Are you listening to him? The day will come when God will end all the suffering. The day *has* come for you to make a difference!

The day will come! The day has come!

(See related stories on next page)

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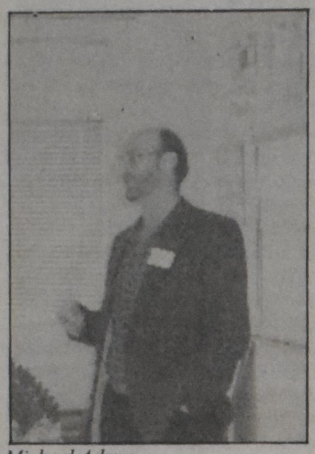
Turning weapons into artwork

Kendra Cazemier

A talented artist by the name of Michael Adams spoke at a workshop entitled: *From Weapons to Art*. Michael Adams led a program in Mozambique to use the collection of arms as a tool for peace building with young people.

Part of his task in Mozambique was to try to collect arms from the people in order to make them and their families safer. The people would voluntarily bring their weapons to Adams and his group. In return they would receive something, such as a bicycle or farming tools. The weapons that were collected would then be destroyed. The guns would be cut up and a grenade or any other explosive would be blown up in a field.



Michael Adams

Pieces of guns were given to artists in a village to turn into pieces of art. In constructing art from destroyed pieces of weapons, a process of healing and reconciliation was begun for all participants. This presentation gave us a chance to learn about a different way people deal with violence.

'A Moment in Time — The United Colors of Bronstein'

ALTAVISTA.COM IMAGE

Naomi Bronstein

Stephanie Vedder

The documentary "A Moment in Time — The United Colors of Bronstein" traces the life of humanitarian aid worker, Naomi Bronstein. It highlights the emotional reunion with war-orphans from Saigon whom she miraculously helped to escape a 1975 plane crash that made headlines around the world.

Naomi Bronstein helped many children in many different ways. She had children of her own but also adopted seven more to make a total of eleven children. Imagine helping children but also having 11 children at home to look after. Her children saw what children today will probably never see in a lifetime. They would wake up and find in the living room, a child lying wrapped up, dead, on the table. That was normal for them to see, although they did not like it. They would also help their mother feed and take care of 50 to 60 children at a time. Naomi also had help from mothers around the neighborhood.

Her children almost kidnapped

Naomi took her children with her to the different countries for awhile. She stopped bringing them because they were in danger. One time, two of her children were almost kidnapped over a fence, but Naomi rescued them. From then on, she left the children at home in Canada with their father.

In the countries where Naomi helped, she made a place of refuge, called Canada House, for the war-orphaned children.

Why was she spared?

In the movie, Naomi had often wondered why she did not die. She boarded 65 Cambodian children on a plane to be brought to Canada, there the children would be adopted to start a new life. She was supposed to get on the plane but decided to take the Canadian plane to Montreal with the other children. Later she found out that the first plane with children to be adopted by American families, had crashed and everyone died. Naomi did not know why she was spared.

There were moments in Naomi's life where she knew that what she did actually was helpful. She had a reunion with the children she helped many years ago on the plane to Canada. They all went to her house and thanked her for the life she gave them.

This movie demonstrated how every bit does help. Naomi Bronstein helped thousands of children in her life time. She said, though, that, "It's just a drop in the bucket."

After the joy, the laundry

"The joy leaves me as soon as I enter the backdoor of my home," Vera says quietly. "I see anger and turmoil on the faces of my teenage children and I feel the joy seeping out of me," she continues. "Throughout the worship service I feel empowered to carry on in my marriage and family life, yet when I come home I feel so overwhelmed by the daily demands, I am ready to throw in the towel." She wipes a clammy hand over her weary brow. "I don't know how to integrate the joy and hope I receive from communal worship into what I need to be doing with my family."

Joy — songs, messages, readings and reflections

Worship services that allow us to experience the joy and blessings of God's grace soothe and comfort our troubled hearts. All of us need this more often than we care to admit. Songs of lament and praise as well as messages of redemption and forgiveness create bridges between lives "not well lived" and those that carry the "fruits of the spirit." Reading and reflecting on God's word through personal devotions or small groups can also add to the healthy development of our spiritual life. Still, we treasure the moments of heightened spirituality experienced through communal worship that leave us, if only for a while, feeling at one with God and the world around us.

The laundry

When we commit our life to Christ we often wonder if we *look* different on the outside. The answer is usually: no. Yet, we *feel* different. After all, when we are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit should that not *show* on the outside? We tend to think so. When we have found unbounded freedom and joy through our *faith* in Christ and when we *feel* His redemptive love, our lives takes on a different hue. Still, we need to do the laundry.

Many new Christians become disappointed when they continue to feel stuck in important interpersonal relationships — like Vera, who had hoped her spiritual transformation would help her deal with various complex interpersonal relationships in her family. Unfortunately, even though her faith became deep and solid, she made little headway.

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

Change makes room for joy and hope

A healthy attitude towards change can help Vera work on her family issues. While she was disappointed her conversion did not solve her problems, she now works towards understanding her marital and family dynamics. Vera is also willing to take a look at *herself* and see how self-awareness, communication skills and problem solving may help solve her issues.

Vera knows her salvation does not depend upon how effectively she works through her concerns, however, she now realizes she will be more able to work out the fruits of the spirit if she learns to walk the path of joy and hope while putting her trust in her Creator.

Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.

Kidnapped pastor freed

Colombia (Compass) — Five guerrillas with machine guns singled out Rev. Juan Carlos Villegas and a fellow church leader from a small group of Christians returning from an April 28 baptismal service at a ranch in Barbosa, 24 miles from Medellin in northwest Colombia. A few days later, the National Liberation Army sent a demand to Family Christian Church: hand over $25,000 or your assistant pastor — Villegas, 26, — will be killed.

"I was terrified — really praying," Villegas said. "They told me that to resist or to escape would mean they'd kill me." He spoke about Christ to all of them. Villegas said that from then on the guerrillas trusted him. On May 9, Family Christian's head pastor gave the rebel "Commander Alex" a Bible in exchange for the hostage they had held for 12 days. "God did something in his heart," Villegas said. "Also, higher-ups pressured him to free me."

Bucking the terrorism trend

COLOMBIA (Compass) — Terrorist incidents declined worldwide in 2001 by nearly one-fifth, but more than half of the terrorist attacks occurred in Colombia. Some 2,800 people were abducted and 3,500 were murdered in this violent country. The annual report on Patterns of Global Terrorism states, "An increased international awareness of terrorism did nothing to stop or even slow the pace of terrorist actions by Colombia's three terrorist organizations — the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), National Liberation Army (ELN) and United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) — in 2001."

On May 2, a church was bombed in the village of Bojay and 117 civilians were killed. In most cases, evangelical Christians become war casualties because they are in the wrong place at the wrong time. Nevertheless, instances of religious martyrdom do occur, such as the May 6 murder of Pastor Fredy Antonio Urueta. The evangelical community in Colombia is doing what it can for violence victims.

Synod 2002

Snapshots of synod

CRC moves toward broader ecumenicity

All stories by Harry der Nederlanden

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich — One of the highlights of Synod 2002 was the time given to representatives from other churches. This was rather unexpected as one of the delegates was from the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, a conservative denomination that joined a half-dozen others to oust the CRC from membership in the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council, which the CRC helped found 26 years ago, so it was expected to be a downer. However, delegates from sister churches in Australia, the Philippines, Cuba, southern Africa and South Africa passed on greetings and gratitude from their churches in a very heartening style.

HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN PHOTOS (2)

Richard Van Houten (left), general secretary of the Reformed Ecumenical Council, meets with fraternal delegates from the Philippines and southern Africa.

Cruel to be kind

The delegate from the Dutch Reformed Churches (DRC) in South Africa, Dr. Willy Botha, made a deep impression on synod by thanking the CRC for putting pressure on his church to recognize that its support for Apartheid was wrong. The CRC broke off relations with the white church for several years until the DRC confessed that Apartheid is a sin. The relationship was restored only last year. Botha stressed that he had been sent with the specific mandate to thank the CRC for chastising his church: "You had to be cruel to be kind," he said. The DRC recognizes that this was the action of a family member to another member who had to be forced to see its mistake.

Botha also said that many DRC families were emigrating from South Africa to other countries, especially Australia, but also to Canada and the U.S. The DRC strongly advises those emigrating not to set up small congregations of Afrikaaners abroad but to join existing Reformed or Presbyterian churches.

The representative from Australia related that the immigrants into his country from South Africa are almost overwhelming some of their congregations. Most of the members of the Christian Reformed Churches in Australia came from three different denominations in the Netherlands during the 1950s. Now the influx from three different denominations in South Africa is drastically changing the face of many Australian congregations and causing some difficulties here and there as some feel as if the newcomers are taking over.

Another forceful and inspiring speech came from the delegate from the Christian Reformed Churches in Cuba, which established sister ties with the CRC last year. He thanked the CRC for its help over the years, especially mentioning classis Northern Alberta, and challenged CRC members to ask the U.S. to remove its blockade of Cuba. He described the role of his small denomination as influential far beyond its size in the Cuban Council of Churches.

The delegate from the Philippines spoke eloquently and proudly of the progress his church is making from being a mission church toward being a sister church. The church in the Philippines, begun in the 1960s, now numbers 70 congregations and is working hard to become ever more independent.

CRC ousted from North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council

The move to oust the CRC from NAPARC was initiated by the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), which is a denomination formed of churches that left the increasingly liberal mainline Presbyterian Church in the US some three decades ago. The rationale given by that church traced the CRC slide into error to Report 44 on hermeneutics, that is, on how to read and exegete Scripture, which culminated in the opening of the offices of ruling elder and minister to women. The PCA rationale argues that the CRC has acted contrary to the confessions of the sixteenth century, which clearly confined these offices to men. By allowing classes to render the word "male" to be inoperative, the rationale claims, the CRC has done a bad thing; it should instead have amended its church order. In response to the CRC's appeal to NAPARC churches that co-operation and fellowship on several levels is important to the CRC and many congregations belonging to NAPARC member denominations, the PCA rationale says, in effect, there's no reason for such fellowship not to continue. In short, we're not being shunned, but we may no longer join them in their deliberations.

Many CRC members will no doubt shrug off this association as retrograde anyhow, because it keeps alive the theological nitpicking of the past. Such sentiments were uttered on more than one occasion on the floor of synod, as if theological fidelity is somehow an impediment to caring relationships. That attitude is equally as dangerous to the church as is the notion that every minor theological difference is an issue of conscience.

CRC to join World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)

Synod 2002 took its first steps toward membership in the WARC, the oldest ecumenical organization in existence. Its membership consists of Reformed, Presbyterian and Congregational churches that have *historical* roots in the Calvinist branch of the Reformation. I italicized 'historical' because some of these churches, especially in Europe and North America, have wandered rather far from those roots. Few of the people in the pews and even in the pulpit will have had very little if any exposure to the writings and work of WARC. Some of it is very diluted stuff and it is good for us to go into this relationship with eyes wide open, which does not mean that we are being proud or superior, just committed to being biblically faithful.

Having said that, we must also acknowledge that WARC is in no way like NAPARC. The latter was organized on a much more intimate basis, aspiring initially to be something like a denomination of denominations, involving shared communion and exchange of ministers.

WARC solidly Biblical

Although it is a confessional alliance, WARC is a much looser form of association: yet, its constitution is solidly biblical, committing its members to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of Scripture. It links over 200 churches from over 100 countries with a membership of about 80 million people. Over half of these are located in Third World countries, which tend to be more theologically conservative than their parent churches. Although, as in the World Council of Churches, issues relating to the poor and the oppressed and other "liberation" causes such as feminism and the environment tend to be featured rather prominently, it has also been active in doctrinal dialogues with churches of non-Calvinist traditions such as the Roman Catholics, Lutherans and Mennonites.

"In WARC, the CRC would not be expected to assume as much responsibility for the doctrine and life of member churches as it does in the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC)," says the report of the Interchurch Relations Committee. "In the IRC's judgment, the CRC should not withhold ecumenical fellowship with the vast majority of the alliance's member churches worldwide that are truly evangelical and Reformed on account of the presence of a few European and North American member churches who we may perceive to have defects." The report also points out that no member church is obligated to agree with studies and pronouncements issued by WARC. Moreover, suggests the IRC, we might even learn something from WARC churches and enrich our own ministry.

Some of the comments from the floor of synod contrasted the CRC's traditional concern with doctrinal purity and our present day openness to other churches as though the CRC has finally become enlightened. The IRC report does not do that, and synod itself added a clause to put fears to rest that this involves a dilution of our confessional stance. The report

Continued on page 13...

Synod facts

Officers

- **President:** Rev. Norman Meyer, Brookside CRC, Grand Rapids, Mich.
- **Vice-president:** Rev. Gordon Pols, Ancaster CRC, Ancaster, Ontario.
- **First clerk:** Rev. Arie Van Eek, retired Canadian pastor.
- **Second clerk:** Rev. Jerry Dykstra, Faith Christian Fellowship CRC, Walnut Creek, Calif.
- CRC chaplains celebrated 60 years of ministry and the CRWRC 40 years.
- **Attendance:** 188 delegates from 47 classes, each classes sending four delegates, two pastors and two elders.
- 28 pastors retired from the ministry and 27 new candidates for the ministry were approved.
- 24 pastors were released from the ministry, some to specialized ministries and some left because of burnout or other reasons.
- over two dozen pastors were called to CRC from other denominations, mostly to Korean or Spanish congregations.
- The entire synod joined in singing happy birthday to Bert Witvoet, former CC editor.
- Synod approved 54 people for 13 different boards.
- CRC ministry shares for 2003 will be 255.77 per adult member.

Pastoral care for homosexual members lags in CRC

The CRC has already seen two extensive reports on homosexuality in 1973 and in 1999. This year's report is a follow-up on that of 1999. Its purpose is to review how effectively the churches have implemented the recommendations of the previous reports in their ministry to homosexuals. The short answer is: not very well. For the most part, says Dr. Melvin Hugen, chairman of the committee, the reports seem to have been ignored. Synod 1999's call to repentance for the churches' failures to minister to persons with same-sex attractions did not "take".

Synod delegates exchange points of view during a coffee break.

This year's supplement to the previous reports is written very sensitively and pastorally. We can all learn from it. But almost any writing on homosexuality raises all sort of feelings and questions among us. Yet, this report was adopted with very little discussion. There were a few questions (such as why a quote from Lewis Smedes in support of same-sex unions was included) that perhaps signaled a suspicion that the report is "soft" on homosexuality. But most tiptoed around the report and remained on safe ground.

The report is not "soft" on homosexual behavior in any way. Smedes' proposal was quoted only in order to reject it. Some excellent things are said about gifts and fruits of the Spirit, themes sometimes used to argue that those with homosexual inclinations cannot all be expected to have those gifts needed to live chastely. The report emphasizes that self-control is something we all need in the area of sexuality, and it is not only demanded of all Christians, it is also available to all through prayer, community and practice.

We are all broken in some way, the report underscores, and are therefore all continually in need of repentance and forgiveness. We find this and the healing we need in fellowship, and those with homosexual inclinations need this fellowship as much if not more than others. In our determination to steer clear of the lifestyle often associated with being gay, we as a church have excluded those wrestling with these temptations and have left them lonely and isolated.

On a quick reading, one may feel the report puts a great deal of the onus on the church and little on the homosexual person; however, the report is not addressed first of all to homosexuals but to the church to guide her in how to minister those among us who are so tempted.

In some ways, the report itself invites tiptoeing and intimidates by its sensitivity. It prevents people in the pews from asking blunt, stupid and perhaps politically incorrect questions. The church community needs to be able to work through that stage to get beyond it. In some ways, I wonder if it doesn't start too far beyond where most of us find ourselves.

Dealing with abuse issue

Synod 2002 also briefly dealt with the matter of abuse. A communication from Classis Eastern Canada suggested that there were problems with the system in place that prevented many churches from preparing themselves adequately. The matter was referred to the experts. I was struck, however, by the huge difference in rhetoric between how we minister to homosexuals and how we minister to abusers. With regard to the latter we take a hard-nosed approach and quickly speak of "zero tolerance". I'm not saying that I have a better alternative. But surely there are places where the two issues touch.

An abuser, too, may be driven by compulsions not entirely of his own making and he or she, too, needs the healing presence of the community of believers. Abuse is a very broad term, especially if we include emotional abuse, and then we must speak of gradations. Zero tolerance is certainly the right approach when it comes to the sexual abuse of children or to wife-beating, but aren't there grades of abuse where so-called zero tolerance poses an obstacle to healing and growth? Questions regarding the policy of zero tolerance were quickly quashed on the floor of synod by the mere assertion that everyone knows precisely what it means. I confess that I can think of situations in which things aren't quite so black and white in regard to some forms of abuse.

CRC moves toward broader ecumenicity

... continued from page 12

also points out that today almost two-thirds of the membership of REC also belong to WARC. Synod 2002 approved the move to seek membership in WARC by a large majority.

CRC moves toward unity with Reformed Church in America

While the CRC met in Grand Rapids, the Reformed Church in America was meeting in Orange City, Iowa. Like the CRC it was also considering a recommendation that would eventually make it simpler to exchange ministers between the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America. It called for further dialogue between the two denominations, which split in 1857, to look for ways of "moving toward greater unity between the CRC and the RCA in their ministry and mission." The approval vote for the recommendation was nearly unanimous.

The IRC report points out that the two churches are already working together in several different areas, such as in publishing Reformed Worship. During discussions, delegates were reminded of some differences that still endure, such as lodge membership and strict adherence to Robert's Rules of Order at meetings. It was also pointed out that the RCA is buddies with a quite different group of friends than the CRC. Does this set us moving in a different direction?

Synod 2002 thought not, and like the RCA voted to pursue efforts to greater co-operation.

Is Catholic mass still 'a condemnable idolatry'?

CRC synods have considered changing Q and A 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism on two previous occasions without doing so. In response to a 1988 overture, the Interchurch Relations Committee was mandated to talk with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church to discover whether its teachings regarding the mass have changed since the Council of Trent's formulation (1562). The Catechism condemns the idea that Christ needs to be sacrificed over and over again in the mass, maintaining that his one sacrifice on the cross is sufficient.

Synod 2002 in its wisdom did not probe too deeply into all the theological nuances entertained by the report of the IRC examining the official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church on this issue. Instead it asked the committee to submit it to Catholic churchmen to determine whether their description of their teachings was accurate and to come back to another synod with further recommendations.

The IRC report seems to waffle ecumenically: in one place it says that, although incomplete, the description of the Catechism while harsh is still substantially true; in another place it says that the CRC and the Roman Catholic Church simply stress different aspects of Scripture's rich teachings. That Lord's Day 80 is not a comprehensive theology of the Lord's Supper goes without saying, and that a one-sentence description of the mass is bound to be simplistic also seems obvious. However, that doesn't mean that the church should not continue to warn against the error of Roman Catholic doctrine, perhaps in kinder words, but the mass carries with it an entire worldview which, I believe, we must continue to criticize from a biblical perspective.

CRC continues to 'detest' some errors

Along the same line as the overture to drop the reference to the mass as "a condemnable idolatry" was the overture to revise Article 34 of the Belgic Confession, which says that "we detest the error of the Anabaptists" for their rejection of infant baptism. The overture wanted the sentence removed from the body of the confession and put instead in a footnote. Synod did not wish to begin tinkering with the wording of these historical confessions, believing, as some said, that would be the beginning of an endless process. Moreover, in the grounds for refusing to do so, it pointed out that we are not bound to the precise wording of the confessions and inessentials but by the doctrines confessed. The confessions inevitably carry with them some of the polemics of their time.

Synod looks into 'hell'

Last year synod looked into a study report drafted by the Reformed Churches of Australia to alter the phrase "he descended to hell" in the Apostles' Creed. This year a gravamen (grievance) was submitted bringing forward the same material. Last year's synod advised the Australian churches not to create a new version of the Apostles' Creed which is, after all, one of our ecumenical creeds confessed by almost all Christian churches around the world. The gravamen wanted to replace the phrase with: "he descended to the realm of the dead."

The phrase "he descended to hell" was not part of the earliest versions of the creed, and "hell" is not an accurate translation of the Latin word "infernum" says the report; "Hades" would be more accurate. A proposed footnote explained: "The Christian Church has never understood Christ's descent into hell as a literal descent into the place of eternal punishment."

As one pastor argued on the floor of synod, this is a questionable claim. The Middle Ages produced all sorts of depictions of Christ "harrowing" hell, that is, descending into hell to liberate his people from the fire, leading kings and bishops from the pit as well as peasants and beggars.

One of the faculty advisors, Dr. John Bolt, maintained that the phrase "he descended into hell" has deeper meaning than Christ going into the realm of the dead; it sums up the immensity and depth of Christ's suffering: he suffered hell, that is the abandonment and wrath of God for us so we would not have to.

This overture to revise also did not pass. There were voices, however, that complained that if we do not put what we believe into understandable contemporary terms, our creeds and confessions will gradually become merely historical documents that we can no longer use very effectively in our witness.

Goal-setting

Eliezer: a biblical model for planning your ministry

Goal setting in the Bible

Rick Warren (Special to Assist News Service)

LAKE FOREST, California (ANS) — There are so many books and tapes on goal setting, I'm bored with them. Even many of the Christian ones have no Scriptural basis. But God has given us a wonderful, biblical model in Genesis 24, where we can follow the steps to setting and reaching goals in the story of Eliezer, Abraham's servant, as he fulfilled his assigned project of finding Isaac a wife.

For years, I've used these 10 biblical steps in planning at Saddleback Church:

1. Determine your position

Ask yourself some questions. "Where am I now?" And, "what would I like to change?"

Take the time to evaluate your present situation. I do this about once a quarter. I ask these questions:

"Where am I headed?"

"Am I still headed in the right direction?"

If you were to call me from a phone booth and say, "I want to come over to your house. Give me directions." What would be the first thing I ask? "Where are you?" I've got to know where you are before I tell you how to get where you want to be.

That's true in any area of life. Before you can know where you want to go you've got to know where you are right now. Determine your position.

2. Define your purpose

You need to clearly state your goal. I suggest getting a specific image in your mind so you know exactly what you want. First, you determine where you are and then you determine what you want.

Abraham said, "I want you to go to my country and to my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac." He knew exactly what he wanted. It was clearly defined. Later on, he gave other conditions: "I want a wife of the same nationality, from the same home town, same faith, someone who is beautiful, a virgin."

The point is — you're never going to reach a vague goal. The more specific a goal is, the easier it is to reach. If you say, "God, bless my wife." How do you know when God has blessed your wife? Sometimes God blesses with a problem or a trial. Is that what you're praying for? You need to be specific. A vague goal has no drawing power. You need to know what you want.

Ask yourself three questions:

"What do I want to be?" (This is the most important: What do I want to be in Christ's likeness?)

"What do I want to have?"

You say, "I want to travel." Great. Where? "I want to have income." Great. How much? "I want a career." Fantastic. What kind? "I want to witness?" To whom? Be specific. "I want to lose weight." How much? "I want to read the Bible." When do you want to read it?"

In 1960, John F. Kennedy got up and said, "Within a decade we'll put a man on the moon." That was a decision. Did he try to figure out all the problems before he made the decision? No. He just set a goal. We're going to go there. Once the decision-making was out of the way, then the country moved into the problem solving. When he made the statement, it was physically and technologically impossible to do it. But he made the decision and later worried about the problems.

You need to be very, very specific. You determine your position, then you define your purpose.

3. Discover a promise

Find a promise you can claim from God's word, and don't worry about the "how's" at this point.

When you're setting goals as a Christian, you don't look at your own resources, your own abilities. There are more than 7,000 promises in the Bible, just waiting to be claimed. They're like blank cheques. Let the size of your God determine the size of your goal. We've set some big goals at Saddleback, and some people say, "Who do you think you are? Who do those people at Saddleback think they are?"

That's the wrong question. The issue is not who we think we are. The issue is who we think God is. How big is God?

Ask yourself:

"What promise can I claim?"

Keep looking in Scripture until you find a promise that's going to help you.

4. Describe the payoff

Every goal must have a payoff or reward. If there's no reward, then there's no motivation to fulfil it. You've got to settle the value of the goal in your mind.

Ask yourself three questions:

"What is the reward?"

"Why do I want it?"

"How will I feel when I get it?"

Why is it important to describe the profit up front?

Because when you settle the "Why?" God will show you the "How?"

When you know why you want to do what you want to do with your life, then you have a calling on your life, and God will show you the *how*.

If you delay in determining the payoff, then you'll give up when times get tough. You need to know the payoff to avoid discouragement.

ALTAVISTA COM IMAGE

Abraham Entertaining the Angels, *by Rembrandt. As Abraham sought God's guidance, so did his servant Eliezer.*

5. Desire in prayer

The Bible says in Mark 11:24 "Whatever you desire, pray and believe and you will have them." When you pray for your goals it does two things:

1. **It reveals desire.** Often God delays an answer to prayer or delays you attaining a goal you've been striving toward in order to see how badly you want it. He wants for you to distinguish whether or not this is a wish or a whim, or if this a deep desire in your heart.

2. **It shows your dependence.** Who are you really trusting in to see this goal accomplished? If I never pray about a goal, what is that saying? It's saying I don't think I need God's help. I can handle this on my own.

I continually ask myself:

"Am I praying for my goals?"

Have I just set them, or am I really praying for them? Your goal sheet ought to be your prayer list. They shouldn't be the only things on your prayer list, but they ought to be a part it: "Lord, these are the things I'm trying to accomplish with my life. I want my life to count. I want my life to be worthwhile. I want to make a difference. I want to be significant for Your glory."

6. Diagnose the problems

With this step, you identify the roadblocks and obstacles that are holding you back.

When assessing your goals, you want to ask yourself two questions:

"Why don't I have this already?"

"What are the barriers?"

The barriers will vary: they may be emotional, financial, intellectual, or relational.

Take a look at Genesis 24, where Abraham sends his servant to find a wife for his son, Isaac. This is a great example of diagnosing the problem.

Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, is going to go to a foreign country. Can you imagine the number of serious problems he faced to reach the goal he'd been given? He needed to go to a country he'd never been to and find a lady he'd never met.

He needed to convince her to go with him and to marry a total stranger. Mission impossible? Would you do that? Do you think you'd be successful in that?

Eliezer has all kinds of problems to reach this goal:

- In verse 21, he has the problem of finding the right girl.
- In verse 49, he has the problem of getting the girl's parents' consent.
- In verse 58, he had to get the girl's consent.

7. Design a plan

Plan out a course of action to overcome the obstacles you've just identified. Write down some specific steps. Set a deadline, and schedule it.

As you design your plan, ask yourself these questions:

"How do I intend to get there?"

"How long will it take?"

As we look at Eliezer's story, we see that his plan is a masterpiece: He sets up a test. He'll take all his camels down to the water and have them kneel down. Then he'll ask a for a drink, and if the woman he asks says, "Let me water your camels, too," Eliezer will know he's found the right woman.

For one thing, this would have to be an unusual woman with a real heart for service. The average camel can drink up to 40 gallons of water! If you add up the camels, she's offering to hand-draw about three hundred gallons of water.

Once this has occurred, Eliezer's plan is to then share his purpose. Only then will he reveal Abraham's wealth and try to get invited to her home, and only then will he pop the question. He has a strategic plan, and he follows it.

8. Discipline your personality

Nothing great is ever accomplished without discipline. The bottom line in your life is character. While you're working on your goals, God is working on you. God is much more interested in you than He is in your goals. During this planning and goal-setting process, God will work on you, making changes as you grow towards your goal.

I've said many times when I speak to pastors, "Growing churches require growing pastors." Likewise, growing businesses require growing businessmen. Growing marriages require growing husbands and wives. The moment you stop growing, you die.

You ought to ask yourself:

"Where do I need to change?" (God is more interested in your character than in the project).

"What kind of person do I need to become?"

When I first moved to the Saddleback Valley and set goals

Continued on page 15...

... continued from page 14

for Saddleback church, I was 26 years old. I thought, "There's no way I'm equipped to handle a church the size of the goal I've just set."

But here's what happened: As the church was growing, so was I. God had it all planned and knew I would grow to greater maturity before the church grew to larger portions.

9. Deposit the price

There is always a price tag for reaching any goal. It doesn't matter whether it's a business, or a church, or any kind of dream. There's always a great sacrifice to reach your great goals. A lot of people I meet want to reach great goals or accomplish great dreams, but they only want to do it if it's convenient. It's as if they say, "I've got this dream, but I only want to do it in my spare time."

Ask yourself three questions at this stage:

- "What will it cost me?"
- "What am I willing to give?"
- "Is the cause worth the cost?"

10. Depend on people

You will never achieve very much in life until you learn to get along with other people. John Rockefeller used to say there was one thing he'd pay more for than any other skill — the ability to work with people. There are a lot of geniuses who can't get along with others. You've got to learn to depend on people because God works through people. It takes teamwork. Success is never a one-man show. *Never!* It's always a joint effort.

Ask yourself at this stage:

"Who else can I involve?"

The secret of a great church is commitment and co-operation. When there is commitment and co-operation, God can do tremendous things. He can overlook all kinds of other things.

Vance Havner once said, "Snowflakes are frail but if enough of them stick together they can stop traffic."

You may not be able to do a lot by yourself, but when God's men and women get together, they can do anything.

I hope you'll take these principles and use them to re-evaluate your personal goals and the goals of your church. May God guide you and grant you the desires of your heart.

Rick Warren is the founding pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California. Started in 1980, the congregation now averages 17,000 attenders at its 6 weekend services. Warren has written several books, including "The Purpose Driven Church," which has been reprinted in 20 languages. More than 200,000 pastors, from 108 countries, have attended a Purpose Driven Church Seminar. Rick is also the founder of **www.Pastors.com,** *a global Internet community for those in ministry.*

Editor's note on goal-setting:

I've printed this article by a very well-known proponent of the so-called "purpose-driven" church as a thought provoker. I'm not at all sure I agree with it. Warren's writings are widely used in the CRC to help churches assess where they are and where they wish to go. This step by step approach is familiar to school teachers, who are required to map every single thing that students do in school in terms of goals and measurable outputs. In recent years every corporation of any size has gone through similar exercises, as have many churches.

On every level, individual and corporate, we are being urged to stretch out our lives on grids composed of resources, goals, objectives plans, etc. (I'm reminded of old-style Soviet five-year plans.) We are urged to mold not just our own lives but also those of our peers and our children according to rational, well-planned objectives, as if we need only get our goals from Scripture and then engineer our lives, our very selves, accordingly.

Is this really how to live the Christian life? Compare Warren's article with that of Petsche (see page 16). Do they agree? To what extent can we presume to plan out our lives – even when we start with biblical goals?

The editor

Notice to readers: *Christian Courier* is online!

After much development work,* Christian Courier *has set up and "launched" its new website:
www.christiancourier.ca. ***Check it out!***

Simple pleasures

Intangible Things
Heidi VanDerSlikke

It had been a busy day, picking stones and planting flower beds. I wasn't lacking fresh air or exercise, but the evening was lovely and I didn't want to waste it. There's always work to do this time of year. I decided to go for a bike ride instead. Sometimes I like pedalling as far and as fast as I can, until my face gets red and I can hear my own heart pound. Admittedly that doesn't take very long. But on this wonderful evening I just wanted to amble along, soaking in the sights and sounds of June.

NETA RUIGE

Behind me the sun was a dwindling gold ball, sinking little by little in the sky, a breathtaking contrast to the serious black clouds lurking on the horizon ahead of me. The scent of apple blossoms and wild phlox mingled in the air as if intertwined with the birds' gentle songs.

I peered into the woods lining the roadway, hoping for a glimpse of a deer or two. All I saw was a couple of turkey buzzards; ugly, hungry looking vultures. I called out to them, just to let them know I was still alive and therefore not yet fair game. They seemed unconcerned, their beady eyes following my progress.

A quiet neighbor

Once out of the woods I rode past the cornfield where last summer I had been so friendly toward my neighbor. Out for an early ride one morning, I was impressed to see him already in the field by 7:00 a.m. "Good morning," I shouted, but he made no reply. Some folks just aren't morning people. It wasn't until the next morning when he was exactly in the same place and the same position that I understood his reticence. Scarecrows speak to no one.

Way back from the road, a trio of Mennonite kids stood by the barn watching me cruise past. Their giggles carried on the breeze and I wondered what they were up to. All at once they mounted their bicycles and began heading down the laneway, fast as they were able. I could hear their bikes rattling closer and closer behind me. Smiling to myself, I considered speeding up, but I knew they'd catch up with me anyway.

A curious sight

The leader of the pack rode alongside of me. A chubby, sun tanned face smiled from under the straw hat. "Hello," he grinned, "Out for a ride?" Bright blue eyes studied my dusty bike and me. I must've been a curious sight — a woman wearing grubby jeans, with a great fuzzy mop of blonde hair, just out meandering through the countryside on a summer evening.

"Yup," I replied, "How 'bout you?" No answer.

Little brother caught up to us. Nattily dressed with black suspenders and sporty cap, he was far too shy to look directly at me. Then came the youngest, their sister I assume, no more than six years old. With braids dangling and pink dress billowing, she pumped along, determined to keep up with the boys. Looking neither to the left nor the right, she sailed easily past me, ringing the bell on her bike, a little smirk on her face.

Island in a busy week

They escorted me just to the next farm, apparently as far afield as they were allowed. Without a word, each one dutifully wheeled into the driveway, and once again I glided past them. Only the spokesman waved. Their dog continued to lope along beside me, a dark brown beast with a neon orange collar. He looked as if he might have eaten the neighbor's German Shepherd for breakfast and I wondered what plans he had for me. Suddenly he came to the end of the fence line and, just like his associates, simply abandoned pursuit. I rounded the bend, heading for home. Somewhere in the distance a cow bawled. My bicycle seat squeaked annoyingly. Contentedly, I breathed in the smell of fresh cut hay.

It turned out to be a ridiculously hectic week. But even in the midst of the busyness that followed, the thought of my little Mennonite buddies brought a smile, and made me realize what a good idea it had been to go for a "non-productive" bike ride.

Heidi VanDerSlikke lives and bikes in Harriston, Ont.

Family/Poetry

Value your children for who they are

COMSTOCK

We should regularly engage in play along with our children, not only for our own enjoyment but to demonstrate the art of leading a balanced life.

Lisa M. Petsche

Recently I watched a television program in which child psychiatrist Dr. Alvin Rosenfeld discussed his book, "The Over-Scheduled Child: Avoiding the Hyper-Parenting Trap." Hyper-parenting involves filling our children's lives with enrichment activities so they don't experience boredom or to give them an edge over their peers.

If you think there's no such thing as providing your kids with too many opportunities, you're mistaken, Rosenfeld contends. He perceives that many children today are exhausted and overwhelmed, their innate creativity and enthusiasm stifled by well-intentioned parents who micromanage their lives.

Some have little or no choice about which activities they're involved in. Others simply want to do too much and their parents don't object.

The root of the problem

At the root of the problem is our achievement-oriented culture, which exerts considerable pressure on today's parents to produce well-rounded kids who are accomplished in academics, sports, the arts and social skills. We're expected to provide our children with a multitude of opportunities at every stage, beginning at birth.

These all come with a price tag, of course, and are one of the reasons many parents perceive the need for two incomes. How else can the average family pay for costly home enrichment resources, plus memberships, lessons, camps and team sports for two or more children on a continual basis?

Related transportation expenses also add up, as does the cost of the convenience and takeout foods our hectic lifestyle often necessitates.

A frequently overlooked cost of our kids' pursuits is the amount of time they can consume.

Unstructured time is vital

Rosenfeld says that with their busy schedules, many children don't have the unstructured time they need in order to invent, daydream, reflect or just hang out with family members and friends.

Yet play is children's preferred activity and a natural method of learning that enhances their imagination and creativity.

It also nurtures their spirit and is an antidote to stress. Not surprisingly, Rosenfeld has found that kids who have regular chunks of free time are more relaxed and energetic than those who don't.

It's not just kids who deserve a life, but parents, too — both as individuals and as couples.

That's why Rosenfeld cautions against primarily deriving our identity from roles such as scheduling co-ordinator, chauffeur, soccer Dad or ballet Mom. "You don't have to be a full-time camp counselor," nor should you be a martyr, he advises those of us who think we're failing our kids if we don't fill every moment of their days with purposeful activity, despite the personal sacrifices involved.

The art of leading a balanced life

Besides ensuring our offspring have generous amounts of free time, we should regularly engage in play along with them, says Rosenfeld — not only for our own enjoyment but to demonstrate the art of leading a balanced life.

We would also be wise to focus more of our energy on instilling solid morals and values in our kids, teaching them how to make choices and nurturing their spirituality.

Moreover, instead of being influenced by the popular culture and comparing ourselves with other parents — and our kids with theirs — we need to learn to trust our instincts as parents. But in order to know what's right for our family, we've got to slow down and reflect. Yes, maybe karate instruction might be valuable for my daughter, but she's already enrolled in gymnastics and swimming lessons. (A general guideline is one or two activities per child.) The potential impact not only on her but also on the rest of our family must be taken into account.

Lisa M. Petsche is a mother of three and freelance writer in Stoney Creek, Ont.

Dandelions

Dear editor,
I read your editorial, "Reading Dandelions" (CC, May 20) and thought this prose poem might amuse you.

Lini Richarda Grol

If there were only a few dandelions
In the whole wide world,
We'd rave about its beauty
And for a simple seed
Pay a fortune.

We would cry for joy
Seeing it slowly grow.
And would eagerly wait
To see it bloom.

We'd cherish it and pamper it,
but of course it would not survive
our loving care, and when it died
we would feel sadly bereaved.

We'd look with envy
At our friends and neighbors
who'd managed to prod their seeds
Into full bloom before their picture window
In their front room for all to see.

They in turn
Would be proud and pleased
And later solemnly bequeath it to their offspring,
who would go right on with the pampering
with special lights, fertilizers and watering.

But now, poor Dandelion, regardless of your beauty,
Your sun-bright flower and ethereal seedpod,
We love you not.

For since you grow to profusion,
Not slowed by drought or drowning rain,
In wide open spaces or subdued seclusions,
My poor little Dandelion, you are always cursed,
Because you are just too much for us.

MARSH SCENE: ILLUSTRATION BY LINI GROL

Curious about Christian Courier?
Why not check out our new website:
www.christiancourier.ca

News Survey

Where persecution starts: losing an argument fighting for truth in Indonesia

The following are a couple of long articles. I've placed them here together because they illustrate a "culture war" that makes a huge difference in people's lives all over the globe — Christians and non-Christians alike. For many Christians, it is about their very survival. Yet, more and more we Christians in the prosperous, free West talk as if ideas – matters of theology and worldview – either don't matter or actually hinder our witness. But the battle with principalities and powers occurring in every country in the world is a battle for the minds of people as well as for souls. This conflict about the role of religion in public life is being fought out in the public arena not just in countries like Indonesia, India and Pakistan but also in Russia, France, England and North America. Neglecting the battle does not result in peace but in persecution, especially for the weakest and the poorest.

We can help by supporting organizations like Freedom House and the Keston Institute, both of which keep persecution in the public eye, by praying for fellow Christians who are being persecuted, by giving more to agencies like the CRWRC that help provide for Christians who are being displaced and by becoming more actively involved in public justice issues that point to a better way. **The editor**

Alex Buchan

The history of persecution teaches many valuable lessons. Among the many is this: Before Christians lose their lives, they first lose an argument!

Persecution does not begin with the policeman's truncheon hitting a Christian's head or with an anti-Christian parliament shouting "aye" to pass a discriminatory law. Long before it gets to that stage, Christians have already lost a battle in the realm of words. They have been successfully marginalized, slandered, discredited, dehumanized — all without a shot being fired. The father of persecution is propaganda!

In their submission to the United Nations in Geneva in April, the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) highlighted this by showing that the road to persecution passes through three phases: disinformation, discrimination, and persecution. The first of these, disinformation, usually begins in the media. The report explains: "Through printed articles, radio, television, and other means, Christians are robbed of their good reputation and their right to answer the accusations made against them."

With Christians thus marginalized, the second phase can begin, relegating Christians to second-class citizens by a host of discriminatory laws. Finally, full-scale persecution can proceed unimpeded.

But persecution reporting tends to highlight the gruesome third stage, not the first stage of disinformation. This is understandable. Debates about points of law, intellectual jousting or even jokes about minorities do not rate headlines, but they do serve to create a new climate that can easily result in persecution later on. But where is disinformation generating arguments now? One place is Indonesia.

Indonesia's Christians are fighting an argument with extremist Muslims. Violent extremists in the Maluku Islands have convinced formerly peaceful Muslims that Christians want to kill them and create a Christians-only state. It's a lie, but it's a lie that has won, at least temporarily.

Even in the rest of Indonesia, where the Christians are a well-tolerated minority, there is a more subtle argument going on which may have long-term importance. At the moment, it is one which only a few Christians are fighting.

This argument has to do with the question of whether Indonesia should adopt Islamic law. Presently, Indonesia is a secular state. If it becomes an Islamic state, then more than 20 million Christians will find themselves in a very difficult position.

Muslim spokespersons are beginning to press for the adoption of *sharia* (Islamic law) in Indonesia. We are the most populous Muslim country in the world, they say, and yet our laws are based on Dutch colonialism and not on Islam.

At this time, the Indonesian press is relatively free, and it is possible for Christians to have the right of reply. A recent debate over the issue of Islamic law in the press deserves special attention.

One Muslim intellectual making the case for the adoption of sharia law in Indonesia is Mr. Wisnu Pramudya, the editor of Suara Hidayatullah magazine. His refuter is Father Franz Magnis Suseno, a Jesuit priest living in Jakarta and a professor of philosophy who has taught many of Indonesia's intellectual elite.

Pramudya, in an article entitled, "The Jakarta Charter is Not Islamic Law," carried in the *Jakarta Post* in May, perpetuates four important myths, potentially dangerous if left unchallenged. Suseno replies in the same newspaper a few days later.

Myth 1

Indonesia would have had Islamic law when it was founded but for the undemocratic and deceitful intervention of non-Muslim, colonial sources.

This refers to the infamous "Jakarta Charter" — a clause allegedly left out of the preamble of the 1945 constitution.

Indonesia's state philosophy is called Pancasila, the first principle of which was "Belief in One God." The Jakarta Charter intended to add, "with the obligation for adherents of Islam to implement the Islamic law." Many Muslims believe they were unfairly robbed of their chance to implement Islamic law in Indonesia, and this sense of bitterness, even entitlement, has grown over the years.

Pramudya claims that the Jakarta Charter was part of the constitutional draft when Sukarno, the founder of the Indonesian state, and Mohammed Hatta, were kidnaped. When they turned up a few days later to read the constitution, the Charter was left out.

What pressure were they subjected to during their mysterious kidnaping? He speculates, "Some say the ... words were omitted at the behest of Mohammed Hatta, a Dutch-educated socialist democratic figure, reportedly under pressure by a Japanese officer and representatives from eastern Indonesia, who threatened to secede if the formula remained."

Ever since, Muslims have been easily roused to anger over the omission of this clause. But Suseno, in an article in the *Jakarta Post*, argued that this is a grave misreading of history.

For a start, leaders did not "leave it out" at the declaration of independence as Pramudya claims, because Sukarno never read the draft constitution where the Jakarta Charter was based. Also, the Charter was not "months in preparation" but hastily formulated in June 1945. Finally, Hatta did leave it out when he read out the constitution on August 18 of that year. But no one really knows why, and many Muslims were not keen on the charter being adopted in any case.

The facts of the case are more prosaic. The nationalists, who continue to form the political majority in Indonesia, were nervous about Islam being given a preferential role in the state. And the fact is that in Indonesia's only two free elections since its founding — 1955 and 1999 — Muslim parties calling for Islamic law to be restored have never fared very well, gaining 42 per cent of the popular vote in 1955 and only 16 per cent in 1999.

It seems the people, including a majority of Muslims, do not want Islamic law imposed. But the uncomfortable truth of this is not acknowledged by Muslim intellectuals, who prefer to rehash conspiracy theories about the Jakarta Charter. The debate will never go away.

Myth 2

Since Indonesia is an Islamic culture, it can only hold together if its laws are based on Islam.

"Indonesians do not have the courage to build a legal system on what are actually their own roots," writes Pramudya. He claims that Indonesia is really following the laws imposed by the Dutch, which are by implication Christian. The danger of disintegration would be greatly lessened, he said, if Indonesia accepted a system of law more in keeping with its own culture and history.

To press his point home, Pramudya argues that making sharia the law in Indonesia is just like Britain and France imposing secular law on their own countries. Both Britain and France, he claims, were struggling with too much pluralism, where kings, churches and legislatures all jostled for control. To solve this, a faction decided to impose a secular state to create peace. To do the same in Indonesia, a faction should impose the only kind of state that will create peace ... an Islamic one. History will prove them to be as right as their European counterparts, Pramudya states.

The opposite is true

But Suseno claims the truth is the opposite. Britain and France opted for a secular state because religion was becoming a cause of conflict. They dealt with pluralism, he writes, "by resolutely refusing to found modern states on religion." Pramudya, by contrast, wants the very opposite — to make one religion the basis of the state. This will not lead to a healthy pluralism, warns Suseno.

Fear of pluralism as a destructive force runs high in Indonesia, a country with a bewildering patchwork of cultures and ethnic groups. At the moment, nationalism is regarded as a glue that will hold the country together, but many Muslim intellectuals and fundamentalists are making a big pitch that only Islam can provide this glue.

Yet the extremists push for a form of Islam not favored by the Javanese Muslims, who have a mystical, Sufi background, which makes them more resistant to an authoritarian fundamentalism.

Myth 3

All Western advances in technology and culture were borrowed from the Islamic world centuries ago, and these technologies all were birthed while Islam practiced sharia law.

"The West's knowledge and technological advancement today was founded from what had been developed by Muslim scholars centuries earlier," claims Pramudya. The implication is clear — just because a state adopts sharia does not mean it cannot keep pace with the modern world.

Suseno acknowledges that Islam did indeed have a technological and cultural golden age from the 6th to 12th centuries and did provide a vital infusion to Western development during that time. But there are three other factors that make the above claim a myth.

First, the great technological developments of the West came in the 18th century, long after the influence of Islam had waned.

Second, Islam's greatest contribution to the West was actually to preserve the writings of another Westerner, Aristotle. "The truly great merit of these Muslim philosophers was that they brought Aristotle to Europe. It is generally accepted that it was the switch from Plato to Aristotle as 'the philosopher' that put Europe on her way to modernity."

Third, Islam after the 12 century "disappeared from the map of global intellectuality" because Muslim leaders became legalists that persecuted open-minded intellectuals. The kind of Islam that applied sharia did not develop any culture, but instead created a poor conformism that condemned Muslim nations to centuries of "catch-up" with Western ones.

Myth 4

There is no place in the world where the imposition of sharia law has caused harm in any state.

Pramudya states, "There is no historical proof of a country being torn apart due to the implementation of sharia law."

Suseno does not refute this claim, but a look around the world shows many states torn apart by sharia. The most recent is probably Nigeria. Since some northern Nigerian states began imposing sharia in early 2001, more than 800 churches have been demolished and hundreds of Christians killed in fighting.

The World Evangelical Alliance report stated, "The campaign by northern Nigerian states to establish Islamic law has brought new Muslim-Christian conflicts to a country already plagued by religious, ethnic, economic and political problems."

So there you have it: claim and counterclaim, sometimes intellectual and abstract, sometimes emotional and hard-hitting. But this is the way persecution gets nipped in the bud. Christians — when they have the chance — should take every opportunity to dispute false claims before they attain the status of guiding myths.

For once the argument is lost, persecution is not long in coming.

See related story on page 18.

British officials deny reality of persecution in India

Abhijeet Prabhu

United Kingdom immigration officials recently refused asylum to a persecuted Indian Christian couple and their two children on the grounds that the prime minister of India — a known Hindu extremist — stated that persecution of Christians in India was "an aberration."

After an appeal, they were refused asylum again in May, this time because Christians — a "biased source" — provided the evidence of persecution. The story of the Bakers asylum quest raises vital questions in the persecution realm not only for India, but also in the Western response to it. Compass Direct's India correspondent, Abhijeet Prabhu, profiles the case below.

It was easy for the Hindu fundamentalists to single them out. "White" Mrs. Baker, with partly British ancestry, stood out like a sore thumb in the Hindu stronghold of Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh (MP) state. The skirt and blouse she wore to the railway office where she worked and her English-Christian name made her a symbol of hate — hatred for everything that is Western and everything that is Christian. In this semi-urban town, the local Hindu extremist Bajrang Dal organization was determined to associate the two.

Janet and her husband Robert, with mixed British and Indian ancestry, often had to face stinging remarks made against them. "You are bastards the British left behind," was one of the more polite remarks directed at them.

But it was the Bakers' fervent practice of Christianity that was more than the extremists could stomach. Twice a week, Janet and Robert would go to a church for the service and for the "charismatic" meeting, after which they would make a point to help the poor and destitute that lined the streets of their city.

The last straw

The poor began to see why this couple so compassionately cared for them and greeted them everywhere with the phrase, Jai Yesu Masih ki — "Praise to the Lord Jesus Christ!" This was the last straw.

Soon the attacks began. On October 20, 1999, a group of men armed with iron rods, knives and cudgels barged into the church, pulled Robert from the church and beat him. They screamed at him and told him that his Christianity could not save him.

None of the church members dared to intervene. This was no ordinary mob. Not only were they Bajrang Dal activists who had been spreading terror among Christians in the city, but this particular group was instigated by the son of the local MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly). What could they do but watch and pray?

It was Janet who was left to lift her unconscious husband and take him to hospital. What would she say to her two children, Angela (13) and Cecil (7)? Robert's assailants were arrested but released without charge because no one dared to come forward as a witness.

And then more threats came, fast and furious. "We will rape you and your beautiful daughter in front of the husband," and, "We will 'finish off' the whole family." The threats did not take long to materialize. Three months later on January 20, 2001, when Janet and Robert were at work in the railway office where they both had well-paying, comfortable and permanent jobs, a group of men burst into their home. Angela was alone. The men began to molest her. She screamed.

Fortunately, a neighbor heard her cries and made frantic phone calls. Janet and Robert rushed home to find Angela traumatized. They called for medical help and later rushed to the police, only to regret it as they watched Angela being further traumatized as the police humiliated her, asking her particularly embarrassing questions about what her molesters had done.

Angela's assailants were again arrested and detained for 48 hours by the police but were released because of lack of evidence.

Now there was no one to protect them, and the attackers had told them this was only the beginning. Meanwhile, Sunday school outings and picnics were disrupted. Bicycles were ridden into Angela's rickshaw on the way to school. Vulgar comments were hurled at her. Graffiti was scribbled on their front door and rubbish and excrement were thrown into their garden.

Being of partly British parentage, they had no relatives in India. There was only one option: flee the country. But India is a big country. Surely they could find refuge in another state? But the Bajrang Dal is everywhere. The long arm of Hindu fundamentalism would find them wherever they went.

So in May 2001 they fled to the United Kingdom. After all, Britain was partly their ancestral home. And they had always been told that Britain was a Christian country! Surely they would find refuge among their "own" people.

Imagine their shock when on December 1, 2001, British immigration officers barged into their home at Hayes in London and took the family to the police station and interrogated them separately. Robert was detained for a whole day and then transferred to Campfield Detention Centre and from there to Oakington Detention Centre near Cambridge. After being held for nine days, he was sent to Grimsby, England, and housed with three other asylum seekers.

Meanwhile, Janet was forced to sign a statement saying that she would not apply for asylum. She and the children were finally settled in a house at Doncaster away from Robert, who continues to be stationed at Grimsby despite her appeals.

Now it was time to go through the actual process of applying for asylum. But the Home Office flatly rejected their application, supporting their refusal with an unreferenced quote from Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee.

The Indian prime minister had said that the persecution against Christians in India was an "aberration and an exception to the general texture of peaceful and cordial relations between the various communities," the Home Office letter stated.

Compass has obtained a copy of the letter and has detected a number of factual errors. The Home Office is either ignorant of the situation or refuses to acknowledge it. They appealed again.

This time their case was supported by the Rev. Dr. Nick Sagovsky, former dean of Clare College, Cambridge; the Rev. Jules Gomes, a priest from the Church of North India; and Sister Pat, a Catholic nun working on justice and peace issues.

The trio made a strong case and submitted articles from previous issues of Compass Direct as evidence for persecution in India.

Penniless and in limbo

The Bakers' appeal was again turned down. This time the adjudicator at Rotherham Magistrates Court acknowledged that there was persecution in India, but again quoted an unreferenced comment by the Indian prime minister "to firmly and impartially investigate all incidents of violence against Christians in India." A number of references were made to the prime minister's claim to support the cause of Christians in India.

Robert, Janet, Angela and Cecil are now waiting to be "picked up" and deported. They are living in a state of limbo. They are penniless. They have lost good jobs in the Indian railways. Angela and Cecil have been doing well in school even in the U.K. The family has become part of the local church in Doncaster.

They can never go home. They will have to return to another part of India, live in fear and begin life from scratch. "Whatever it is, let God's will be done," says Janet. When the adjudicator asked her husband to change his name, Robert said: "This is the name with which I was baptized. How can I deny my baptism? I will never give up Jesus."

Christian Courier Word Search

R	P	H	H	I	E	L	E	M	A	S	Y	N	O	D
C	O	M	M	U	N	I	T	Y	Q	G	A	H	U	H
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S	E	R	V	I	C	E	B	K	F	J	T	I	M	P

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july
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reformed
report
rose
service
stcatharines
story
synod
tim
vicky
wood

Nose for News

Bert Hielema

MIRACLES DO HAPPEN. The official word from Washington is that global warming is a fact. Says the U.S. Climate Action Report 2002: "Our temperatures will rise. Massive and costly environmental damage is likely to take place."

So what is the reply of the U.S. President to his underlings? Incurious George shrugs it off, telling the press that this is a bureaucratic document that will not affect his opinion. His words: "American Ingenuity will beat Global Warming and turn it to our advantage, because reducing energy use will harm the economy." How great a faith! In spite of massive contrary evidence, a perfect instance of blind trust in technology.

CAN I FORETELL WHAT he will do? Let me speculate: I can well imagine that the current U.S. administration, which has such a great confidence in its Missile Defense system (this $70 billion plus — so far unproven — space venture) that it sees it as only a small step to, for instance, build a giant earth-cooler, a huge canopy with reflective mirrors bouncing the sun heat right back. Since technology can do everything, perhaps the Hoover people can invent a large vacuum cleaner to suck the CO^2 right out of space. Or General Electric can manufacture an enormous airfilter to bring pollution back to normal. Or, since the Bush-men are so gung-ho on nuclear power, they can engineer a atomic explosion in the stratosphere to form a permanent mushroom cloud shielding the earth from the sun's heat.

It is their conviction that American Ingenuity knows no limits, and that thus technology can be used to cure the ills of technology. Isn't that like using the devil to cast out the devil? Let me qualify this, because not all technology can be equated with evil. I am convinced that the branch driven by solar, wind, pedal and animal power is legitimate, which means that almost all other, especially the carbon- and nuclear-based technology, because it is polluting, is evil, in which I, too, am a reluctant participant. Where are we today? American Ingenuity has brought us CFCs, that chemical cooling stuff that made air conditioning possible and opened up for us the wonderful world of Las Vegas. But it also has invaded the heavens like the Tower of Babel, with equally disastrous results, witness the damaged state of the Ozone Layer, daily in the news with our Ultra Violet (U.V.) rating.

I AM CONVINCED THAT the blessings of American Ingenuity are short-term. Take weeds and insect pests. It was supposed to wipe them out. It made Dupont and Monsanto rich but, somehow, their pesticides and herbicides are no longer able to kill their targets; instead they have turned on us, as we have seen an alarming increase in cancers and tumors. Bush's own Environmental Protection Agency told us a two weeks ago, that, thanks to air pollution, almost 70 per cent of all Americans live in areas where contamination from toxic chemicals poses an increased health risk. At the same time at a conference it was reported that breast cancer has doubled in the past 20 years.

In the final analysis, American Ingenuity means nothing more than novel, clever ways to make money: a recent study on drugs found that new medicines seldom contain anything better. Said Nancy Chockley, president of the National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation: "The plain fact is that many new drugs are altered or slightly changed versions of existing drugs, and they may or may not be all that much better than what's already available."

Of course, it is much cheaper to re-package and re-name an existing pill, give it a different color, and advertise it as a miracle cure.

I'D WISH A DRUG against fighting could be invented, as waging war seems to be in our genes. Perhaps what we need is GMHs: Genetically Modified Humans. Not only are India and Pakistan at each others' throat, but just as ferocious is the war here among government agencies. Give two federal initiatives somewhat identical tasks, and watch the rivalry. When our own Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS) was founded, the RCMP felt left out and undermined CSIS whenever it could.

J. Edgar Hoover of the F.B.I, did the same when he tried to fight off attempts to create the C.I.A. Recent developments have shown that the division of labor into foreign (C.I.A.) and domestic intelligence (F.B.I.) was never workable, since spies cross borders. So Bush proposes a new approach: a third, overarching authority, setting the stage for even more professional jealousy and turf war. The budget for this, as yet unnamed, security arm, is more than $50 billion (Can.) or about four times as much as we spend on our entire Canadian Armed Forces.

Let me propose a name for this new outfit: American Security Service, of which the initials form a fitting acronym describing its promotor. And who is this promotor? Not George W. Bush. The man who prepared the 4 cm thick (1.7 inches) 'briefing' manual for the president was none other than Andrew Card, the White House chief of staff, sharing with Dick Cheney the most powerful position in the world. This man controls access to the president and decides what he sees. Andrew Card used to be a lobbyist for General Motors, hired to influence — quite succesfully, I may add — the U.S. government to let gas guzzling vehicles multiply.

Lately both Washington and Ottawa have been forced to do a lot of damage control. In May Bush, in his halting way, promoted a small-time thief and gang member, Jose Padilla, who landed in his home city, Chicago, from Pakistan, via Geneva, to the Einstein class. The man intended to stealthily and unobtrusively assemble a dirty nuclear bomb, transport it to Washington and explode it there. When I heard this, my cynicism won out, which is no great feat for me. After the well-deserved criticism directed at the C.I.A. and the F.B.I., the timing of this capture and the intent of this little crook made me doubt the truth.

TERRORISM IS A DIRTY business. So is politics. Just as American Ingenuity is all about money, so politics is all about getting re-elected. And if using fear and hyping danger increases popularity, then truth and reality fade away.

Chrétien is no stranger to this, either. I am really thrilled to see how, finally, this street fighter, this grab-the-throat bully, has a worthy opponent in Paul Martin, with the fitting initials of P.M. A classic duel of brawn versus brain. Too bad that the U.S. president has no real opposition at this point.

Now that his compliant heir apparent, John Manley, is at the till, watch Chrétien dole out dollars. With a projected $10 billion surplus this year, he can afford to buy some votes, that is to say, he can use our money to pursue his re-election. Since people, by and large, are gullible, he may even pull it off, given the state of Canadian politics.

BACK TO BUSH, WHO, I think, sees himself as governing a large corporation, of which he is the delegator, the man who sets the global outlines and lets his officers carry out the orders or, more likely, let them come to him with proposals and he will make a prompt decision, based solely on political — not economic or ecological or 'justice to the poor' — considerations. To me, what I have labeled the American Security Service has strictly business overtones, as it combines scores of federal agencies into one grand department. The U.S. president is the only president ever with an MBA, a Masters in Business Administration dating from the 1970s. In business school he was taught to regard state involvement as evil and private enterprise as the highest good. Now he is in a position to implement this vision and sees himself as the CEO, the Chief Executive Officer, his cabinet as the vice-presidents, and the Congress and Senate as the Board of Directors — well-paid, but basically kept in the dark about real happenings.

SEEN IN THAT LIGHT, combining 11 portfolios and 26 agencies into one gigantic department, resembles past business practices. During the boom of yesteryear, ambitious corporate executives, too, bought companies left and right, and merged them to gain 'synergy,' that mysterious word supposed to mean that the combined result of the acquisitions exceed the sum of the individual entities. If recent history is any guide, this bodes ill for Bush. Many of these artificially created conglomerates have collapsed and their CEOs with them — Enron and Ken Lay, Tyco and Dennis Kozlowski, World.Com and Bernie Ebbers, Global Crossing and Gary Winnick, Adelphia and John Rigas. A recent study has found that the stocks of the top 50 acquirers have fallen three times as much as the Dow Jones average. I may be wrong — I often am — but I see the new security agency with its 170,000 employees, in that light: it certainly was the 'in thing' to do when George Bush studied business some 30 years ago.

Today this is no longer true. As always Small is Beautiful, easier to oversee, quicker to change, cheaper to operate. The greatest failure of this colossal merger is that it excludes the two greatest fiascos: the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. Curiously, the new department will be forced to rely on these intelligence-gathering bodies for information and thus be vulnerable to the same problems that have bedeviled those organizations.

To apply a political answer to a non-political problem, is usually no lasting solution.

Bert Hielema has been in business since 1952 and is still an avid student of the commercial scene. He lives in Tweed, Ont.

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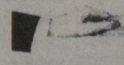
Your gift of $10 or more to **Reformed Faith Witness** is tax receiptable and will be greatly appreciated by the staff of **Christian Courier** and the board of RFW. Please make your cheque payable to Reformed Faith Witness



Winter Bookkeeping & Tax Service
4184 Mountain Street, P.O. Box 844
Beamsville, Ont. L0R 1B0
phone 905-563-4471 fax 4696
email: winter@vaxxine.com
Emma Winter

MERRITT FUNERAL HOME
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(905) 957-7031

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Alan Gerritsen
5529 Regional Rd. #81
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B3
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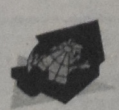
267 Grand River St. N., Paris, ON N3L 2N9
phone: 519-442-3136

Electric Power Tool Service Saw Blade Sharpening
Supplier of Quality Woodworking Machines

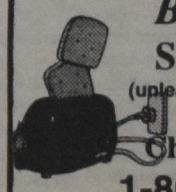
ART'S TOOL SALES & SERVICE Ltd.
10 Nihan Dr.
St. Catharines, ON
L2N 1L1
(905) 646-0728
Aart Van Krimpen

"We service what we sell"



PICTURE THIS! You can advertise in Christian Courier's Business and Service Directory once a month for only: $25 + GST. Call 1-800-969-4838 for details.

Glendale Motors
407 Wilson St., Ancaster
Just west of Mohawk on Hwy. #2
We supply propane
Rob Brouwer
Doug Kloet
(905) 648-4113 **Adrian Kloet (owner)**



***BETTER* THAN SLICED BREAD**
(unless you're making toast)
a subscription to
Christian Courier
1-800-969-4838

Classifieds

Classifieds

As of May 1999:
Note: 7% GST will be added to all prices listed below.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Christian Courier is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, thirteen days prior to publication date.

RATES

All personal and family announcements: $16.00 per column inch (P.I.) + GST (columns are two inches wide). Display advertising re.: businesses and organizations: minimum $18.20 P.I. + GST, depending on design and frequency.

PHOTOS

There is a processing fee of $25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged P.I., but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original (which we will return) or a downloadable Internet image.

PERSONAL ADS

Christian Courier would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is $35. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at $16 P.I. per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

We offer a $25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in *Christian Courier* and to parents who announce the birth of a child in our paper. Please let us know when placing your ad that you want to take advantage of this offer.

SUBMITTING YOUR AD

mail: *Christian Courier*
#4 - 261 Martindale Road
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
*** After July 20, our address will be 1 Hiscott St. St. Catharines, ON L2R 1C7**
Phone 905-682-8311
fax: 905-682-8313
accounts@christiancourier.ca

OTHER INFORMATION

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format. And editing style.
b) Please provide us with clear copy. *Christian Courier* is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.

Personals

Christian Lady, 51, living in South - western Ontario interested in meeting Christian gentleman. Reply to:
File # 2732, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale St. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Christian e-mail guys and gals wanted by computer friendly, independent girl in early twenties. Please contact **Meesh_22@hotmail.com**

Healthy, kind, Christian lady, age 65-70, active member of CRC, living in Eastern Ontario, would like to correspond and/or meet kind gentleman of similar age and interests such as traveling, socializing, etc. Respond to file **#2734, 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1**

Birthday

It is with gratitude to God, the giver of life, that we invite you to celebrate with us the 80th birthday of our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother

Jane DeLange (nee Windhorst)

We, her family, thank her for her wisdom, "nuchterheid", sense of humor, active participation in our lives and especially for the model she is to us of faithful Christian living.
Please join us at an open house in her honor on
Wednesday, July 10, 2002
in the fellowship hall of Brantford Christian Reformed Church
2:30 to 4:30
Thea & Art deGroot
Sonja & Ralph Merritt
Henny DeLange & Jerry Reitsma
Abe & Jackie DeLange

Jennifer deGroot, Esther deGroot & Matt VanGeest, Amaryah deGroot
Matt, Zita, Hannah & Tamara Merritt,
Annette & Emma Merritt
Jessa Reitsma, Elek Reitsma
Katie DeLange, Abby DeLange

Contact address: Jane DeLange
14 Sheffield Avenue
Brantford, ON N3S 6V8
(519) 752-2882
jdelange@bfree.on.ca

Anniversaries

1952 June 13 2002
HARRY and JANET ANTONIDES
(nee Veenendaal)
With thankfulness to God, we celebrated the 50th wedding anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents.
Ann & Paul Weiringa - *Cowichan Bay, BC* - Sarah, Jeanette
Dean & Leana Antonides - *Richmond Hill, ON* - Vasia
Dale & Jessica Antonides - *Barrie, ON* Sean, Emily, Joel
Home address: 40 Finchurst Dr. Willowdale, ON M2R 1L1

1952 August 1 2002
With joy and thanksgiving to God, we wish to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents
JOHN and CATHERINE PRANGE
(nee Joosse)
Congratulations, Dad and Mom, Grandpa and Gramma! May the Lord continue to bless you with good health and happiness. With love, from your family.
Bernie & Marina Prange
Chris & Antoinette and Michael, Phil, Dan & Stephanie (fiance), Bernie, Amy, Jason - *Wyoming, ON*
Fran & Bill Kuyvenhoven - Shawn, Joel, Rochelle - *Surrey, BC*
John Prange - Sarah - *Wyoming, ON*
Joan & Jim Berry - Katherine & Geoff Kalsbeek, Angela, Sarah, Justin, Michael - *Tsawwassen, BC*
Ron and Anita Prange - Luke, Jill *Tara, ON*
Ken Prange - *Sarnia, ON*
Consider joining us as we celebrate with an OPEN HOUSE on Saturday, Aug 3, 2002 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. at Redeemer CRC, 5834 Blackwell Sideroad, Sarnia, Ontario.
Address: 1939 Avenue Rd. Bright's Grove, ON N0N 1C0

Anniversaries

1952 June 24 2002

"Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain" Psalm 127:1a

With thankfulness in our hearts to God, we are happy to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of

EVERETT and CATHARINA HOOYER
(nee Dieleman)

May you continue to receive God's blessings of health and happiness in your lives together.

Love from: Marilyn, Andrew, Betty, Wayne, Martha, Ed, Laurie, Glen, and Irene. Special love to Grandma and Grandpa from your 16 grandchildren.

Correspondence address:
RR#6 Dresden ON N0P 1M0

1952 July 6 2002
"As for me and my house we will serve the Lord."
HARM and ALI KELLY
(nee ZANTINGH)
will celebrate, the Lord willing, 50 years of marriage on July 6, 2002. We invite you to share in our celebration by joining us for an OPEN HOUSE to be held on **July 6,** 2002, in Bethel CRC, Dunnville, Ont from 2-4 p.m.
Congratulations Mom and Dad, Oma and Opa. We thank you for all your love and care, and your example of faithfulness. We thank you for teaching us the ways of the Lord and living in your lives the example of that love. With much love from your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.
Ina & Harry Bethlehem
Sheri & Arjan Vos,
Harold & Jennifer (Brianna, Collin)
Rachel & Mark denBak,
Ed & Cherry (Daniel)
Emily
Clara & Gary Wielink
Michael & Natashia (Corey, Shania, Darian, Chloe)
Alice Wielink
Henry Wielink
Keith & Suzanne (Alana,Taylore)
Alicia & Murray Ravensbergen (Michael, Nathan),
Ken & Faye Struyk (Kayla), Henry, Sarah.
Ed & Alice Kelly
Harm & Annette (Joshua), Edward, Alida, Rosalee, Melissa, Matthew, Andrew
Henry & Roeli Kelly
Harold & Rhonda, Jacob, Rebeccah, Henry, John, Aileen, Rosalynn, Ruth, Esther
Harold & Riemke Kelly
Harold, David, Hendrick, Anneke, Laura, Michelle.
John & Sietske Kelly - Harm, Tsjibbe, Edward, Amy, Hendrick, Michael.
Janet & Glenn Oosterhof - Alissa, Miranda, Glenn.
Home address:
RR 8, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W7

Miscellaneous

Huntley's Used Christian Books at 114 Lake St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 5X8. We buy and sell used Christian books. Open Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 - 5:00. **905-988-9223, e-mail: books@interpc.ca**

1952 July 10 2002
With praise and thanks to God we wish to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,
BERNARD and GRADA GROOT-NIBBELINK
Congratulations Mom and Dad, Oma and Opa! We thank God for you and pray that you may enjoy many more years together.
Bill & Tena Groot-Nibbelink
Sarah, Nathan, Christy
Eric & Carolyn Groot-Nibbelink
Jenica, Michelle, Carissa
Elna Groot-Nibbelink
An open house will be held Saturday, July 13 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Bethany Christian Reformed Church, Bloomfield, Ontario.
Home address:
R.R.# 2 Bloomfield ON K0K 1G0

Obituaries

Nov. 25, 1918 April 30, 2002
Sneek, Fr. Sarnia, Ont.
formerly of Harrow, Ont.
On April 30, 2002, the Lord called home our Mem, Beppe and Great-grandmother
JOUKJE HERREMA
at the age of 85 years.
She was predeceased by her husband Dirk Herrema, 1996
granddaughter Joyce Sipkens, 1966
grandson David Sipkens, 1970
Survived by her children:
Janet & Earl Sipkens - *Sarnia, ON*
Richard & Della Croxford (girlfriend)
Keith
Jennifer
Annette & John Holtrop - *Keswick, ON*
John & Gwyn Holtrop
John Maldwyn, Emma, Peter Dirk
Tammy Holtrop
Harmen & Grace Herrema - *Keswick*
Drew
Lorne
We thank God for the long life He has given her and for the blessing she has been to us. We will especially miss her smile and anecdotes.
Correspondence: Janet Sipkens, 758 Murphy Rd.,Sarnia, ON N7S 2X8

1964 May 16 2002
Fort William ON Guelph ON
"The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away: Blessed be the name of the Lord" Job 1:21B
As a result of a boating accident in Georgian Bay on Saturday May 18, 2002, God called home our blessed son and brother
ALBERT HENK VAN OMMEN
Lovingly remembered by his
Parents: Willy and Ben
Dear brothers:
Arthur, Ray & Teresa, Harold
Loving uncle of David and Virginia.
Survived by uncles, aunts and cousins in the Netherlands.
The funeral service was held at 1st CRC Guelph on May 23, 2002. Pastor Jack Van de Hoef officiated.
Correspondence address:
63 Cedar St., Guelph ON N1G 1C4

Obituaries

July 10, 1933 June 14, 2002
S'Gravenhage Chatham
The Netherlands Ontario
LUCILLE SJAARDA
(nee WIELHOUWER)

Changed from her perishable body after courageously fighting a devastating cancer to a new Heavenly body, forever free of pain and tears.

She was a daughter of the late Eliza and Lutina (VanDorsten) Wielhouwer. Dearly loved wife of Kenneth C. Sjaarda, since December 6, 1958. Dear mother and grandmother of Sharon & Bill Folkerts and their children Renee, Ian, and Karen of Chatham, Charles & Elizabeth (Speelman) Sjaarda and their children Amanda, Joel and Matthew of Kleinburg, James Sjaarda and his children Oliver and Julia of Port Sydney, and Carol & Ed Regts and their children Bailey, Bradley and Mackenzie of Chatham. Sister of Audrey (Mrs. Cees DeVoogd) of Chatham, Kathleen (wife of the late H.P. Verburg) of Sarnia, Jean (Mrs. Dick Verbeek) of Muirkirk, Alex Wielhouwer and his wife Johanna (Vanderwel) of Chatham, Adrian Wielhouwer and his wife Gertie (Bax) of Owen Sound, and Eli Wielhouwer and his wife Dorothy (VanRhijn) of St. Thomas. Dear sister-in-law of Jeanne and Brian Baker of Clinton, Margi and Allan Kielstra of St. Catharines, George and Alice Sjaarda of Listowel, Betty and Frank Thompson of Bayfield, Harry and Marilyn Sjaarda of Goderich, and Janet and Gerrit Sheeres of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Also survived by many nieces and nephews. Special friend of Frances (Hoytema) Cook of London. Lucille was a member of Grace Christian Reformed Church, Chatham.

The Funeral service was conducted on Monday, June 17, by Pastor Paul Stadt, with Lucille's niece Kristen Verburg at the piano. Flower bearers were two of Lucille's nieces, Lucille VanderVies and Brenda Bosman. The Pall bearers were Lucille's three brothers, Alex, Adrian, and Eli Wielhouwer, along with her five grandsons, Ian Folkerts, Joel Sjaarda, Matthew Sjaarda, Oliver Sjaarda and Bradley Regts.

The Internment took place at Maple Leaf Cemetery, Chatham, Ontario.

Correspondence Address:
44 Mulberry Court,
Chatham ON N7M 6H8

Church News

Call Accepted:
Pastor James Pot to Maranatha Christian Reformed Church in **Cambridge**, Ontario. Formerly of Red Deer, Alberta, CRC

Classis Niagara has planned its next meeting for 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, **September 18,** 2002 at the Providence CRC in **Beamsville**. Agenda items, including requests to address Classis, should be received before Aug 1, 2002

Church News

The **First Christian Reformed Church** of **Chilliwack, B.C.** hopes to celebrate its **50th anniversary** on Oct. 19th and 20th, 2002 D.V. All former and present members and friends are invited to help us celebrate God's faithfulness. For more information or if you need billeting call: Mrs. Erna Maarhuis at 604-794-7140 or e-mail: pjronda@telus.net

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

A dynamic, growing and multi-staffed church is looking for a half-time **director of worship and the arts** to help us grow in the area of worship, music and the arts. We worship in two service formats (blended and contemporary style) and follow a multiple team approach. Areas of responsibility include worship leading, team development, and worship service production. If you're a self-starter, a team player, and above all, have a heart of worship, we want to hear from you. Please send your enquiries and/or resume by June 25, 2002 to

First CRC,
3600 15A St. S.W.
Calgary, AB T2T 5P8
Ph: 403-243-2244
E-mail: firstcrc@shaw.ca

Wellspring Christian Counseling Services is seeking an additional part-time qualified counselor to complement and strengthen our focus on family and individual counseling. Wellspring is a project of Salem CMHA, north of Toronto. Please send resume to the **attention of Bill Scholten** at:

Wellspring Chr.Counseling Services
123 Victoria St.W.
Alliston, ON, L9R 1L7
Fax 905-775-4310
E-mail billscholten@hotmail.com

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
Full-time and Part-time Building Custodians
SHALOM EVERGREEN TERRACE
275 Main St. E.
Grimsby, Ontario

The Board of Directors of Shalom Evergreen Terrace Non-Profit Senior Apartments Inc. is seeking **both a full-time** (38 hrs./wk.) **and part-time** (15hrs./wk.) **Building Custodian** for its 98 unit senior's apartment building soon to be completed in Grimsby.

Under the supervision of the Property Manager, the Custodians will be responsible for general repair and maintenance of the project, both interior and exterior, and for general appearance and security of this 5 storey structure. Proponents must be familiar with cleaning and maintenance materials, equipment and techniques used for multi-residential apartment buildings and with the operation and maintenance of building systems such as air make-up, bulk heating and air-conditioning and fire safety. The successful candidate must have at least 5 years of related experience and a WHIMS training certificate. The successful applicant will be required to share an on-call schedule. Preference will be given to applicants living within 25 kms. of Grimsby.

If qualified and interested in either position, please submit a resume detailing your education, past and present employment history, community involvement and a minimum of 3 references to:

Hiring Committee
Shalom Evergreen Terrace
12 Bartlett Avenue
Grimsby, Ontario L3M 4N5

by no later than 4:30 p.m., Friday, July 19, 2002.

MUTUAL SUPPORT, a non-profit, parent-model, Christian agency providing residential foster care for children in the Niagara region invites applications for the full-time position of:

House Parent(s)

To fulfill our program philosophy of providing care for at-risk children in a setting that closely replicates a healthy family unit, this is an ideal position for a married couple that wishes to make a serious commitment to helping children that are in long-term care. More than a job, this is a lifestyle choice that can include working alongside your partner in a home-like setting.

Successful candidates would demonstrate an ability to implement Mutual Support's philosophy and Policies, and adhere to its core program values. Applicants should be able to demonstrate their commitment to working with children through previous educational paths, bodies of experience, volunteerism, or ministries to children.

A competitive salary is paid to each spouse.

Applicants may apply in writing, including a resume and cover letter to:

Randy Klassen
Associate Director –
Human Resources
Fenwick, ON LO8 1C0
For information , call **905 892-4332**
Please visit our web site at
http://www.mutualsupport.net

For Rent

ST. CATHARINES AREA - Fully Furnished 3rd **floor loft** with panoramic view in scenic Jordan Station. Parking, laundry facilities, all utilities included. Shared entrance. Single non-smoker desired. $550/mo. Incl. Call Ed at **905-562-4255** after July 15th, 2002.

Georgian Shores Cottage is now renting. Fully **furnished lakefront** cottage that sleeps 8. Located on Georgian Bay in the heart of the Georgian Triangle tourist area. Visit our web page at www.bmts.com/~gregayrh/ to see pictures and learn more about Georgian Shores. New low rate of $550/wk. For info: **519-538-5581** or e-mail **gregayrh@bmts.com**

Summer home in the peaceful countryside for rent. Northwest of Tara, 20 minutes from Owen Sound, Sauble Beach, and Port Elgin. **$300/week. Please call 519-934-3499** for more information.

Bed & Breakfast

Visiting the Niagara Peninsula? Stay for a night or more at:
"Travellers Home Bed & Breakfast"
2666 Eighth Avenue,
Vineland, ON L0R 1S0
Call **905-562-5656** for more info.
All ensuite rooms.
Also motorhome for rent.
www.jdnet.nl/travellershome

To advertise your business or to place a family ad, just call our toll-free number: 1-800-969-4838.

PICTURE THIS!
You can advertise in our Business and Service Directory once a month for only: $25.00 + GST

Miscellaneous

transform.

INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN STUDIES
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www.icscanada.edu

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE

It's hard looking for a new home when you retire.

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BECAUSE YOU ARE BUYING A LIFESTYLE AS WELL AS A NEW HOME:

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- ☑ Yes, you'll appreciate the easy-living design features.

MAKE THE MOVE ✧ CALL 905.309.7888
OCCUPANCY THIS FALL! 80% SOLD!

Help to support Christian journalism!
Christian Courier **is a ministry of Reformed Faith Witness. All gifts of $10 or more are tax-deductible and will receive an official receipt. Please make cheques payable to: Reformed Faith Witness, and send to: 4-261 Martindale Road, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1**

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

July 1	Pinehurst Conservation Area, **Paris, Ont.** Frisian Picnic. See ad in this issue.
July 13,14	Lindsay CRC, **Lindsay, Ont**. celebrating 50th anniversary with dinner and service. Call :705-328- 0177 Fax:705-328-3156 or E-mail: lawilms@sympatico.ca
Aug 24	**Clinton** & District Christian School **40th year reunion**. For information on events, call 519-482-7851.
Sep 18	**Classis Niagara** meeting 4p.m. at Providence CRC, **Beamsville**. See ad in this issue for more details.
Oct 19,20	First CRC of **Chilliwack B.C. 50th** anniversary For info & billeting: call Erna Maarhuis 604-794-7140 or e-mail pjonda@telus.net

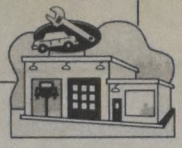
Frisian Picnic

Monday, July 1, 2002
Starting at 11 a.m.
At Pinehurst Conservation Park, Paris, Ont
On Highway 24A (4 miles north of Paris)

BUSINESS FOR SALE

Established Automotive, Farm Equipment, and Small Engine Repair Business. Consists of 5040 sq ft Building on .77 acre. Located in village **15 min. west of City of Thunder Bay** and 15 min. east of fishing, camping and skiing. There are 3 C.R.C., 1 U.R.C. churches and Christian School in the area. **Includes all** Computer Auto Diagnostics and Accounting Systems and all other Repair **Equipment**. Inventory for Tractor and Farm Implement Parts over counter sales, Lawn and Garden parts and Repair Equipment.

Large established customer base and experienced staff. Owners retiring after 30 years, willing to make a smooth transition as not to interrupt this successful business. For further info, please call **807-935-2150** or after hours **807-935-2258.**



The Living Word
Sermons for reading services.
Contact:
CRC
R. Vander Ploeg, Secr./Treas.
37 Brick Pond Lane
Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1
Phone: (519) 539-2117

Join now! Invest in your own community.
We have $10 million in approved loan applications to fund before the year end.

Your funds will be invested in CRC and Christian School building projects in Canada. You'll earn a competitive and fair rate. See the next issue of Christian Courier for rates.

CRC EXTENSION FUND
Christian Reformed Extension Fund
45 Harriet St., Toronto M4L 2G1
Phone: 416-461-1207; Fax: 416-465-6367

A special rate is available to first-time subscribers to *Christian Courier*:
$25 for one year.
Friends of CC have made this special offer possible. For more information, call us at: 1-800-969-4838.

***Christian Courier* is online!**

Christian Courier *has just completed and launched its new website:* www.christiancourier.ca. *Check it out!*

To advertise your business or to place a family ad, just call our toll-free number: 1-800-969-4838.

Lunch is on Us!

Book your Martinair flight to Europe and receive 10 Euro's per person.

Offer valid until July 31, 2002; some restrictions apply.

Valentine Travel

For all your Martinair flights
Valentine Travel Service
Mississauga: 905-890-5333 or 1-800-268-6144
London: 519-472-2700 or 1-800-265-1141

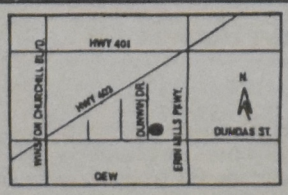
TIME FOR NEW FURNITURE?

Come and see our beautiful showroom with the European flair!

SCHRÖDER FURNITURE

... for that special item!

Our "coil" spring furniture has all the support and comfort you need.



Mississauga, Dundas St. — 2 Blocks W. of Erin Mills Parkway (905) 828-9511

Low interest rates getting you down?

If you are over 65, have you considered the attractive rates, tremendous tax savings, and support of your favourite charities with a gift annuity?

Sample rates: Male 70 **7.2% totally tax free! for life!**
Male 80 **10% tax free for life and**

a small one-time tax receipt. Female rates somewhat lower.
Joint rates for two persons available. Link Charity Canada, a newcomer, is sponsored by Partners International, Voice of the Martyrs, In Touch Ministries, Operation Eyesight and Emmanuel International. Write, call or fax for a confidential and no-obligation quotation.

Phone 416-410-4244, Fax 416-465-6367
45 Harriet St. Toronto M4L 2G1

News

World Cup provided outreach opportunity

GOAL 2002 LOGO

Alan Doerksen

VANCOUVER, B.C. — Besides attracting many soccer fans to Japan and South Korea, the World Cup Soccer championships also offered the opportunity for some mission groups to run special outreaches in those countries. Youth With A Mission (YWAM), Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC), and other mission agencies co-operated in a program called Goal 2002 — focused on reaching out to soccer fans and players.

YWAM, CCC and other co-operating groups focused Goal 2002 especially on Japan, in partnerships with local churches throughout Japan from many denominations, reports a Goal 2002 press release. Japan has a much smaller percentage of Christians than South Korea. Outreach events took place in the 10 Japanese cities which hosted soccer games as well as in other parts of Japan.

A strategic time

"We believe this is a strategic time to reach Japan for Jesus in many ways, including covering Japan in prayer, intercession, evangelism, worship and unity," explained organizers. "We are bringing in over 500 volunteers from many nations to serve the local churches and do evangelistic events."

These events included:

- setting up Christian festivals throughout Japan in each of the 10 host cities to reach many young people with the gospel;
- inviting Christian soccer teams from England, Korea, the U.S. and Hong Kong to hold soccer clinics, to play some major university and top teams in Japan and to share their faith in God;
- holding kids' games in many locations with the goal of reaching children for Jesus.
- sharing testimonies by Christian soccer players, screening games in churches, handing out tens of thousands of tracts, and showing Christian television programs with soccer teams and other Christians sharing the gospel.

Goal 2002's festivals were local events, hosted by churches, at which volunteers set up big-screen TVs to show games for enthusiastic soccer fans. These were good opportunities for fellowship with other Christians and non-Christians from all over the world. The festivals also featured performances by bands and gospel choirs, and included street outreach such as mime, praise music, face painting, testimonies, and personal counseling.

Members of the Japanese soccer team (above) cheer after scoring a goal against Kazakhstan. Below, members of Brazil's team congratulate each other.

Inspiring kids

The kids' games, which combined sports and the Bible, were the continuation of a project started at the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000, which has since been held in eight countries.

"We are hoping that kids games will be used for giving great joy and challenges through sports and the Bible to Japanese children..., and also teaching them how to have a fun time with each other and think of others rather than just trying to win the game," explained organizers on the Goal 2002 website. "We desire that kids games give the children an encouragement to be able to play courageously in the field of their lives. This program is based on the Bible teaching that each child is very special and loved by God and made to live with eternal joy. We will teach them through the experiences of participation in games what true sportsmanship is, what is meant by valuing individuals, and how important teamwork is. This will then help the children to grow healthy in their hearts and bodies."

True spirit of sports

Youth Cup/ Sports Net events, including soccer day camps, were also held for teens and youth in their twenties, "to cultivate their leadership, to bring up the leadership of Christian sports men and women and to teach them the Bible and the true spirit of sports." Christian sports players and volunteers from Japan and other countries organized these programs.

At game sites, Goal 2002 volunteers also did some distribution of tracts — which included soccer players' testimonies — and handed out videos, sports Bibles, and guidebooks which included previews of matches and profiles of players. These were also handed out around the co-operating churches' neighborhoods, and at train stations.

Materials included Campus Crusade's *Jesus* videos with a soccer introduction, *Jesus for Children* videos with a soccer introduction, an Athletes In Action (AIA) evangelistic soccer video, New Testaments, an Interactive Guide to the Games, soccer player testimony tracts, a soccer version of the Four Spiritual Laws booklet and an evangelistic soccer player *manga* comic book.

FIFA WORLD CUP WEBSITE PHOTOS (3)

Japanese customs inspectors give Adidas soccer balls a thorough going-over.

The Ultimate Goal

The AIA video, titled *The Ultimate Goal*, was "an evangelistic video featuring top players from around the world," explained Graham Roxburgh, AIA's director of soccer ministries in Canada. AIA is a ministry of Campus Crusade.

The Ultimate Goal was produced in Europe, and is available in 30 languages. During the World Cup events, the video was handed out to athletes and others in Japan, Roxburgh told *Christian Courier*. Some AIA staff were in Japan and South Korea during the event, but no Canadians were involved.

According to Campus Crusade, teams of volunteers were recruited and organized in their home countries to work alongside of Japanese churches in and around the 10 cities which hosted the World Cup games. Campus Crusade teams came from February through the end of June for one- or two-week short term projects.

One team, which worked in the city of Urawa on June 3, reported: "We had a great time. We had 13 of our church people come to pass out [tracts] for the first time ever at the station. People were quite responsive to taking the pamphlets. So we probably passed out 4,000 of the Japan Baptist pamphlets, 2,000 CDs and a number of the tapes and videos. We saw no police and had no negative experiences. We are full of thanks to God."

"The overall goal of the Goal 2002 committee is to enable as much effective evangelism as possible using the opportunity of the World Cup games for the benefit of the Japanese churches and international visitors," reported the Campus Crusade website.

News Digest

Sweet tooth thief nabbed

MEXICO CITY, Mexico — (Reuters) It was a tasty heist while it lasted. For four straight mornings, a thief with a sweet tooth rushed into a pastry shop in Mexico City and held up the duty employee at knife-point before making off with a chocolate cake.

His mistake, however, was to pounce every day at 8 a.m. sharp. So, one day, the "Azteca" pastry shop's manager called in the police a few minutes ahead of time and they nabbed the thief as he tried to pull off the cake heist for a fifth straight day.

Mexico City's police department said in a statement the thief, Evaristo Perez, and the chocolate cake were then both handed over to judicial authorities.

Fast-food bug franchise

BANGKOK (*Globe and Mail*/Reuters) — Forget potato chips. The latest snack to catch on in Thailand is crispy crickets and other insects. These have become so popular that a new 31-kiosk fast-food chain, called Insects Inter, selling the bugs has caught on like wildfire.

Insects have long been a staple for some Thais, especially in the country's northeast. But in cosmopolitan Bangkok, Thais and foreigners have considered them a health risk. Insects Inter's founder is working to change that and says, "We buy only live insects, free of insecticide." The company's motto is: "Never mind the look — it tastes great."

Lend me your cars

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (Reuters) — Inhabitants of a small city in Argentina have started to lend their cars to the police, who cannot afford to run their own vehicles as the country's worst-ever recession forces budget cutbacks.

Resident Oscar Pinto told local radio a community fund had been started that was also paying for the makeshift patrol cars' fuel in Junin, a city of 93,000 people in the Pampa grasslands about 250 km northwest of Buenos Aires.

"We had this crime wave, and when we talked with police they said they didn't have enough cars or money for gasoline," Pinto said, adding that the existing police vehicle fleet was mostly old and broken down. "So I said I'd loan them my car." Pinto asserted this strategy had been effective, declaring: "Crime is nonexistent now."